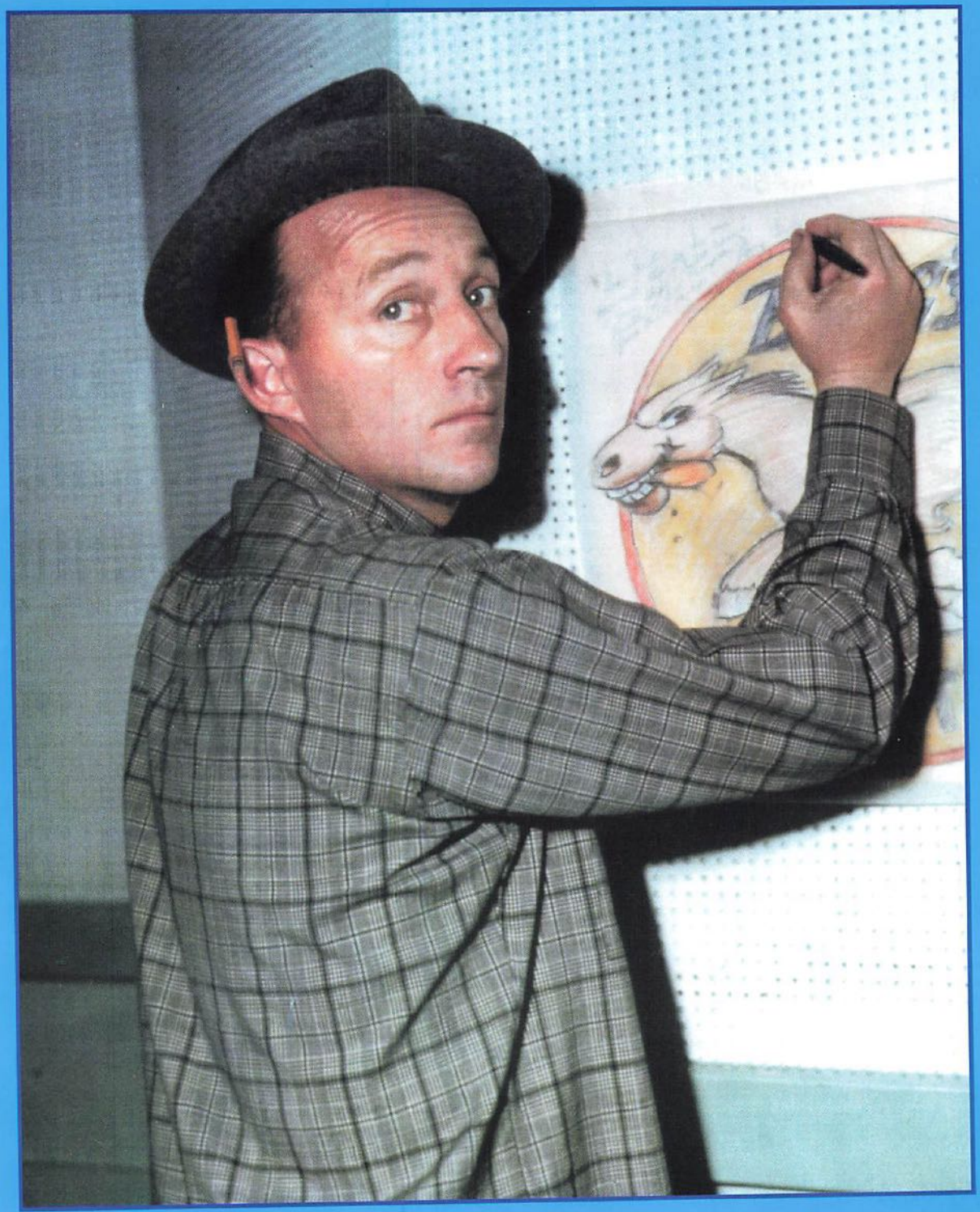
BING

SPRING 2002

No. 130



THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

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Founded in 1950.

Web sites: Club: www.crosby.circle.btinternet.co.uk
BING magazine: http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html

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Membership renewals fall due on 1st January each year and subscription rates effective for 2002 remain as:

UK	£10 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£11 per annum
USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$30 per annum
South America	£15 per annum
Japan	£15 per annum

All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) US and Canadian members who should send their remittances in US dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 2002.

EDITORIAL

"Spring is here, and all the pretty flowers that
grow, grow just for you,
Skies are clear and all the little stars that glow,
glow just for you"

Bing sang those words in 1952 and certainly Spring is a season of beginning again and optimism for the future. So it is with Crosbyana and there is plenty on the horizon for us too.

The possible merger with Club Crosby may have been decided one way or the other by the time you are reading this. Wayne Martin, the editor of BINGANG, has been canvassing the opinions of his members and most seem to support a merger. The active officers of Club Crosby were scheduled to vote on the issue at the end of March and we will advise the result in our Summer edition.

This edition has news of the well-publicised John Joyce auction which will give many of us food for thought as we ponder our own collections. Also we have a review of the excellent discography which has been produced by Wig Wiggins and Jim Reilly. Gord Atkinson gives details of a further opportunity to purchase CDs from his award winning radio series "The Crosby Years" and all of the regulars, except Lionel, are in evidence and in good form. To maintain our international flavour, there's an article from Denmark and for the first time, details of a CD from Russia.

Lionel, Greg Van Beek and your Editor are pushing ahead with a book about Bing's TV appearances and hopefully further details will be given in the next issue of BING. The book may be a limited edition like the radio directory. The indications are that it will be around the same size as Wig's new discography.

It now seems that Gary Giddins' book is to be released in a paperback form in the USA in September. The suggestion that a paperback version would be issued in the UK last December proved to be erroneous. Gary's book has inspired our back cover this time. Pat Shields kindly sent this in and we give our sincere thanks to Tower Records for it. We have been using letters from Bing to Gord Atkinson for our inside back cover in recent issues and this time it is the turn of John Weir to have one of the letters he received reproduced. What a prolific letter writer Bing was over the years!

There was very little response to my appeal for help with a campaign to celebrate the centenary of Bing's birth but may I thank those few who did respond. We shall do our best with our limited resources. The formal start of the Centenary Campaign will be the Hofstra event which also

comes just after the twenty-fifth anniversary of Bing's death. Wig has been working very hard with the Hofstra people and he gives full details in his article. Whether we will then have another celebration at Gonzaga in May 2003 has not been decided and I have been discussing this with Hobie Wilson of Bing's Friends & Collectors Society. Hobie has organised a number of banquets in honour of Bing in the past and with his members likely to be the main supporters of a Gonzaga based meeting because of geographical considerations it seemed to make sense to consult with him.

The various Crosby web sites produce all kinds of contacts and my most recent call was from an assistant producer on the BBC show "Never Mind The Buzzcocks". They were going to use a vague story about Bing's early life and they wished to check its accuracy with me. It is very pleasing for us to have this reasonably high profile and long may it continue.

Finally, I suppose that some of us old hands tend to be a little annoyed with those who know only of "White Christmas" when Bing is mentioned. However it was clear from the publicity over the last holiday period that we continue to owe a huge debt to "White Christmas", whether as a record or a film, for introducing the younger generations to Bing. Hopefully some of them will want to know more and they can then uncover the incredible details of his career. Gary Giddins' book and the new 4-CD box set from Proper Box will be ideal for those starting out on such a voyage of discovery.

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

Springtime 2002 sees the issue of BING #130, thirty-six years on from the publication of the first BING by Frank Murphy in January 1966. Frank's decisions to name the magazine BING and the club *International Crosby Circle* were nothing less than inspirational and your management team are proud to continue bringing you a magazine which still carries that so descriptive title.

This time of year is my opportunity to thank the team and their partners for their dedicated hard work in producing our fine journal. Members do appreciate the team's efforts as their letters to me testify but I am a little concerned that we do not seem to have any volunteers coming forward to take our places. **Succession planning** is important if we are to survive and prosper in the future and particularly after 2003 when I would like to rest from my duties as Secretary/Treasurer. Volunteers please contact me.

NEW MEMBERS

The ICC continues to attract new members and most cannot believe that we are a thriving, successful club offering good service to our membership 25 years after Bing's passing. We are delighted to surprise them and extend a warm welcome to the following new members: -

AUSTRALIA
Wendy Mahoney (Kelmscott, Western Australia)

ENGLAND
Jim Bacon (Whitstable, Kent), Joyce Bartlett (Portsmouth, Hampshire), Roy Booth (Little Neston, Cheshire), Bernard Cripps (Port Chester, Hampshire), Mr W E Davies (Goldaming, Surrey), Adam Endacott (North Chingford, London), Jim Gillespie (Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire), Ray Mitchell (Bradford, West Yorkshire), Hazel Moore (South Shields, Tyne & Wear), Jim Reed (Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex), Mr A K Scollar (Worthing, West Sussex), Mr K Newton Smith (Sheffield, South Yorkshire), Mr A Sutcliffe (Halifax, West Yorkshire), Mr D A Thompson (Liverpool), Paul Tomlinson (Hull, East Yorkshire), Clem Vickery (Kings Lynn, Norfolk) and Mr W A Willis (Forest Hall, Newcastle).

IRELAND
Patrick Butler (Garyowen, Limerick).

SCOTLAND
Arthur Smith (Old Town, Peebles) and Sarah Thomhill (Stirling).

USA
Karen Anderson (Blue Springs, Missouri), Thomas Chuey (Antioch, California), Amanda Duisman (Berkeley, California), John Guthrie (Silver Spring, Maryland), Laurie Letourneau (Shrewsbury, Mass.), Auburn Lindsay (Indianapolis, Indiana), Vito Marino (North Bergen, New Jersey), Thomas Messner (Cincinnati, Ohio), Patricia Monahan (North Brookfield, New Jersey). Mike Moore (Wolf Lake, Illinois), Ted Nesi (Attleboro, Mass.), Carol Reese (Birmingham, Alabama), Robby Robertson (Fort Worth, Texas), James Rtizema (Charlotte, North Carolina), Judy Schmid (Syracuse, New York), Adam Schumacher (Kent, Washington), Ernest Sciutto (New York, New York), Ronald Striano (Eugene, Oregon), Rob Swiatek (Fairfax, Virginia), George Welling (Hyattsville, Maryland) and J. B. White (Ojai, California),

DONATIONS

The International Crosby circle has been privileged to receive exceptional gifts from the following members:-

Paul Hennessey, Roy Irvine, Mr W E Davies, Donald Bostock, Tim Page, Chris Hall, Roger Addey, Jeremy Rose and Arthur Blood.

Arthur's donation came via the sale of his famous stamps and we thank those who supported this attractive venture.

We are indebted and grateful to the above members and also those below who have given generously when renewing their subscription to ICC for 2002. Without the support of such donations the ICC could not provide members with the excellent service that they now enjoy.

Ian Amott, Maurice Beardmore, John Bignell, Ken Bramley, Frank Brannigan, John Brenhan, James Bryne, Vera Campbell, Peter Carpenter, June Coates, Mr C Collindridge, John Davis, Donald Flear, Brian Ford, Ron Gould, Les Grassby, William Green, Joan Griffiths, Harold Hanke, Douglas Haywood, Tony Heasman, Doug Hellier, Jack Hobday, Ron Holder, Peter Howard, Frank Kelly, Frank Keogh, Harry Kirkman, Robert Larkin, Sylvia Lawrence, Don Love, Tom Matthews, D McNamee, Leslie Mills, Peter Monaghan, Thomas Mooney, Ronald Moss, Mr R J Nation, Margaret North, Wally Oldfield, Goronwy Owen, George Patmore, Alf Peyton, Arnold Pope, G L Robinson, H C Ross, Robert Sharp, Tony Slauter, Gillian Stenning, J. E. Stiles, Jim Stuart, Alec Vaughan, Trevor Wagstaff, Ronald West and Tom White.

DEATHS

It is with sadness that I inform members of the

death of **Peter Carpenter** of Peacehaven, East Sussex. We learnt of Peter's passing from his wife Bernice who told us that Peter had died on Christmas Eve 2001.

Peter had been a member of the club from the sixties and he had always been generous with his support both financially and by way of his friendly supportive letters. Our sincere condolences are extended to Bernice and her family.

BING CROSBY - DAY BY DAY

This is an exciting and very interesting book that gives a fascinating insight into what are often the daily events in Bing's long and illustrious life. Malcolm has excelled in interposing contemporary comment into his previous text and this makes the book a joy to read. The text is vastly enlarged and the book is a 'must have' for any serious Bing enthusiast. Greg Van Beek will expand in his review.

DVDs and CDs

My friends Wig and Laura Wiggins, Ole Meistrup and Gun Damo kindly sent gifts of the following DVDs for Christmas 2001. *Road to Rio, Road to Bali, The Bells of St Mary's* and *White Christmas.* The films reproduce excellently and I am most grateful to have them in my collection.

Properbox 34 is an excellent 4 CD set and it's worth buying just to have the well written thirty-six page booklet. Jim Reilly has reviewed the box set in his *Keeping Track* section but I would like to encourage members to support this company, as they do seem to care about their product. You will see that the company has also placed a full page advert with us and they are offering many other box sets of our kind of music which are worthy of consideration.

MEMBERSHIP 2002

At the time of writing (February 12) there are approximately 130 members (25% of the UK membership!) who still have to renew their membership for this year. Their support is needed and valued and I trust my appeal will result in the vast majority remaining as members.

Until summertime my best wishes to all our readers.

Michael Crampton

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st DECEMBER 2001

Income	**£**	**Expenditure**	**£**
Subscriptions and donations	8030	Production of BING magazine (Covers 3 issues, including postage)	6900
Sales - Calendars	1905	Calendars	2454
Leeds - Receipts	242	AGM costs	620
Sales - Jonzo CDs	172	Secretarial costs	588
Sales - Back issues	76	Jonzo CDs	209
Sales - Books	75	Editorial costs	163
		Tribute - Michael O'Toole	40
		Publicity	36
Bank Interest 2001	20	Sundries	6
Balance 31/12/2000	4350	Balance 31/12/2001	3854
	14870		14870

Notes:

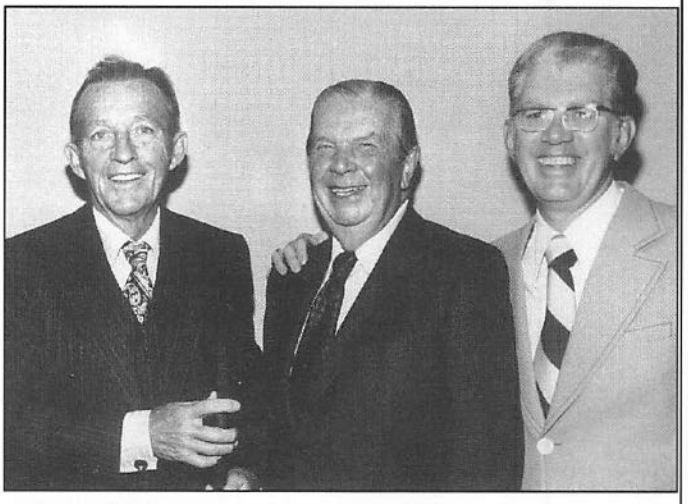
1. Most of the expenditure and income for the 2002 calendar will be shown in the 2002 accounts.
2. The accounts are a simple unaudited Income and Expenditure summary and amounts owing and stocks held are not shown. The club is able to cover its anticipated expenditure in 2002.

Michael Crampton. Secretary/Treasurer

GORD ATKINSON'S "THE CROSBY YEARS" — A MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY OF BING

by Gord Atkinson

Of all my fond memories of my times with Bing, one of my favourite recollections occurred when he had a momentary lapse of memory. It was during a lengthy interview with him at his Hillsboro home. In a nostalgic moment, I told him about the first time I heard one of his records being played electronically through my old phonograph player. It was one of my favourite Crosby classics, "Whistling in the Wildwood". I was amazed that he didn't remember it and even questioned its existence. Out of that amusing exchange, however, he surprised me by singing and whistling the first song he ever sang publicly, a ditty his dad taught him about a dog named, "Rover". It was a treasured personal performance.



Gord Atkinson with Bing and Ken Carpenter at the 1976 radio awards in San Francisco. "Gord Atkinson's The Crosby Years" won prestigious awards from the National Broadcasters Association and Columbia University of New York. Bing was honoured with a lifetime achievement award.

That entire sequence is featured on the second program of my 14-hour radio anthology, "The Crosby Years".

Following the release last winter of two of the CDs from the series entitled, "A Crosby Christmas", we are now releasing parts one and two from our "Crosby Years" collection, which was produced in 1975 for Bing's 50th anniversary in show business. The first program highlights Bing and his brothers, Larry and Bob, reminiscing back to their early years. The second program follows Bing's rise to fame with Paul Whiteman and the Rhythm Boys. Our special guests on these two programs include Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour, Phil Harris, Tony Bennett, Ken Carpenter, John Scott Trotter, Perry Como and James Van Heusen.

These digitally re-mastered CDs run over 60 minutes each and feature incomparable Crosby performances from different eras, combined with Bing's reminiscences about his recordings, films and famous co-stars. For a preview, log on to my web site at www.whenfm.com.

It is our intention to release all 14 programs by the end of 2003 to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Bing's birth. Two CDs will be released with each issue of BING.

My sincere thanks to the ICC members who purchased "A Crosby Christmas" and for your kind comments. My deep appreciation to our friend and editor, Malcolm Macfarlane, for his encouraging support.

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: These CDs are really very special issues and members should not confuse them with other programmes called "The Crosby Years" put out by John Salisbury in Portland, Oregon in the 1970s. Sales of the "A Crosby Christmas" CDs were excellent in the UK but negligible in the USA for some reason. A separate insert regarding the first two parts of "The Crosby Years" is enclosed for UK readers, and US and Canadian members can obtain the CD from:

Greg Mausz, Anderson Publishing,
102 Boyce Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K2B 6J2, Canada
[Phone: (613) 721-0811,
Email: gmausz@sympatico.ca]

The cost (including postage) in the USA and Canada is $12.00 U.S. for one CD and $22.00 for two CDs. Checks in US dollars are perfectly acceptable. I mention this as I am still not sure why there were so few sales in the USA last time. The last offer of "A Crosby Christmas" remains available.)

ROSEMARY CLOONEY HAS LUNG SURGERY

Rosemary Clooney underwent successful lung cancer surgery at the Mayo Clinic in January. She had the upper lobe of her left lung removed after being diagnosed with lung cancer the previous day during a regular physical exam. Press reports indicated that she was talking and laughing with her family the day after the surgery. She was expected to be hospitalised for 10 days or so but I understand that her progress has been somewhat slower than that. Her brother, Nick Clooney wrote the following

in his column in the Cincinnati Post on February 20.

> *It's a good opportunity to answer your questions and concerns about my sister Rosemary. Her recovery from major surgery on January 11th remains steady. There have been no setbacks and, though still in the hospital, she sits up much of the day and is walking the halls, with assistance, morning and afternoon.*
>
> *Her husband Dante - who just had a birthday himself Monday - is with her all the time and her children take turns visiting. She is grateful beyond words for your concern and prayers. So are all the rest of the family.*

Rosie was originally due to appear at the Grammy Awards ceremony in Los Angeles on February 27, where she was nominated to win her first Grammy and was scheduled to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award. Her nomination was for best traditional pop vocal album for "Sentimental Journey - The Girl Singer and Her New Big Band." She had previously been nominated for an award in 1997 for traditional pop vocal performance.

We wish her well on her road to recovery.

White Christmas still in the charts!

Billboard runs a "top catalog albums chart" and it is very pleasing to read that the MCA album "White Christmas" was at number 13 in December in the USA. The album has been in the charts for 63 weeks in all, peaking at number 8. The chart is compiled from a national sample of retail store, mass merchant, and Internet sales reports collected, compiled, and provided by SoundScan. Catalog albums are 2-year-old titles that have fallen below No. 100 on The Billboard 200 or reissues of older albums. Weeks On Chart column reflects combined weeks the title has appeared on The Billboard 200 and Top Pop Catalog Albums.

That was nice to see and then on December 12, the BBC website announced:

> *White Christmas*, written by Irving Berlin and famously performed by Bing Crosby, was the most-played of all festive tunes in pubs, bars and clubs across the UK last year. *Winter Wonderland*, originally written in 1934, was second, with Slade's *Merry Xmas Everybody* third, according to a survey of performances carried out by the Performing Rights Society.
>
> "If you write a classic song that gets into peoples Christmas consciousness, then it's going to stay around for a long time," said the society's Adrian Crookes. Because Christmas songs do not go out of fashion as quickly as chart tunes, songwriters can earn a healthy amount in annual royalties when their songs are played and released on compilation albums.
>
> "The great traditional Xmas songs have become such a part of Christmas that they are going to stick around," Mr Crookes told BBC News Online. Christmas songs have always been important, he added, and many more outlets now have the facility to play music - making it seem like the same songs are everywhere.
>
> "Rather than it being more popular to play Christmas music now, it's just that there are so many more places to hear it," he said. All of the songs in the top 10 were composed in the 20th Century, with *Winter Wonderland* and *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town* the earliest written, in 1934.
>
> The most recent was 1987's *Fairytale of New York*, a chart hit for Shane McGowan and Kirsty McColl.
>
> Crosby's version of *White Christmas*, taken from the film of the same name [sic], was recently voted number two in a poll of the best songs of the 20th Century.
>
> 1. White Christmas
> 2. Winter Wonderland
> 3. Merry Xmas Everybody
> 4. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
> 5. Fairytale of New York
> 6. Santa Claus is Comin' to Town
> 7. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas
> 8. Mary's Boy Child
> 9. Merry Christmas Everyone
> 10. I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday

Another feature which reminds us of Bing's links to the Christmas season is displayed by the online auction house Ebay each December. Sellers can place items for sale on the site for periods up to 10 days and throughout the year, on a revolving basis, there are invariably 600 Bing items for sale. In December the number of items being offered doubles to around 1200! I have noticed this trend for the last two years and long may it continue.

Also, whilst thinking about last Christmas, can I just mention that the Barbican Screen in London ran a season of Walt Disney films in December and January to celebrate 100 years of Disney magic. Included in the series was *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* which since its release has been virtually unseen in the cinema although of course it has been on TV and latterly video and DVD. Trevor Wagstaff represented the ICC at the showing.

Talking of the cinema, another seasonal mention of Bing was seen when Bing's film *White Christmas* (the first movie filmed in Vista Vision) returned for a 2-week run on the big screen of the Englewood Theater in Independence, Missouri, December 14-27. And whilst considering this famous film, Greg Van Beek gave us the incredible news that according to the December 28th issue of *Video Business Magazine,* the best selling videotapes in the USA for the week ending December 23 were as follows:

1.) Shrek
2.) Pearl Harbor
3.) The Princess Diaries
4.) Rush Hour 2
5.) Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas
6.) Jurassic Park III
7.) WHITE CHRISTMAS
8.) Cats & Dogs
9.) A Christmas Story
10.) O Brother, Where Art Thou?

Amazing to see *White Christmas* so highly placed! Australian member Ron Field was on the London-Toronto Air Canada flight in December and was pleasantly surprised to find that *White Christmas* was the inflight-movie. Many people discover Bing through the film and I was interested to see the following entry on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum in January from a young lady called Eleanor.

> I found Bing a few years ago. I had always been a fan of old musicals but since they rarely show Bing's musicals on TV I had never seen one or even heard of Bing. So around Christmas time I saw *White Christmas* on TV. I only saw the last half but my thought was "Wow this guy is good" and I couldn't wait until it was on TV again and I could see the whole movie. Then last year at college I heard "We'll follow the old man..." coming from down the hallway in the dorms. So I quickly flipped through the TV channels hoping to find it (I didn't have the movie yet) but I didn't. So I went into the hallway to find out from whoever was watching it what channel it was on. It turned out the girls next to us were watching a tape of the movie so I sat in their room and we watched it. By the time it ended there must have about ten of us in there watching the movie. I was amazed to learn that everyone else thought Danny Kaye was the best looking guy and the one they wanted to marry (when they were younger). I personally would have chosen Bing. So Mike to name the song that brought Bing to my life I would have to say "White Christmas". I was just amazed at how much Bing was able to convey with that one song, the good times we remember from our past and the hope that all the years to come will be just as memorable. I have yet to hear anyone sing "White Christmas" like he has.

Lovely to read these comments! The film was also shown by various TV stations of course which is usual for the time of year and there was a nice article by John G. Ekizian in the *New York Post* on December 14 which we have great pleasure in reproducing below with grateful thanks to the paper and to the writer.

ME, BING, & THE BEST CHRISTMAS FILM EVER

It was one of those recipes that was impossible to get wrong: a rousing salute to our men in uniform, a fresh Vermont snowfall (via Hollywood), America's favorite crooner singing the nation's favorite Christmas song. Forty-seven years after it's release, "White Christmas" remains a holiday movie classic that seems to show up the minute you've decided that you're not in a holiday mood.

The fact that it's the kind of musical that Hollywood hasn't made in over 30 years makes it easier to forgive it's flaws and high sugar content. Rosemary Clooney, now 73, is the last remaining star from a cast that included Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye and Vera-Ellen.

"They dubbed Vera's voice and if they could dub my dancing we would have had a perfect picture," says Clooney.

The movie's plot - two song-and-dance men meet a sister act and put on a Christmas show to boost the morale of a retired Army general turned innkeeper - was not far from home for Clooney, who broke into show business partnered with her sister, Betty. The movie and real-life roles are reversed - Clooney (who plays the reluctant "Betty Haynes" in the movie) was the more ambitious sister in real life.

The singer is on the road too much during the

holidays, she says, to get a chance to watch "White Christmas" every year. (In fact, she'll be at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, N.J. tomorrow night when the movie airs on WWOR/Ch. 9 at 8.) Clooney sings "White Christmas" in her act during the holiday season. And both the song and the movie still conjure personal memories of her longtime friendship with Crosby, who died in 1977. "Bing is one of the real heroes of my life" says Clooney, who performed with the crooner regularly over the years. "He was confident that I could do anything, whether that meant acting in the movie or performing a duet with him, and that always gave me tremendous confidence about my ability."

Some people thought Crosby was cold and tyrannical, but Clooney describes him as a misunderstood professional who remained supportive of her throughout her sometimes-tumultuous life.

The song "White Christmas," of course, made its debut 12 years earlier - in a 1942 movie called "Holiday Inn," starring Crosby and Fred Astaire. Bing's rendition of Irving Berlin's "White Christmas" was the unexpected hit. The Guinness Book of World Records lists it as the most popular single ever, estimating sales of between 50 and 100 million.

Paramount's backing for the "White Christmas" movie originally hinged on the re-teaming of Crosby and Astaire with Berlin. But the movie was delayed when Astaire bailed out. The reasons for his exit include competing claims that he was injured or felt he was "too old to dance" (even though he danced in movies after 1954) or that he hated the script.

Donald O'Connor, who had just wowed movie audiences in "Singin' in the Rain" was hired to replace Astaire but had to withdraw with a back injury. Kaye, who was used to being the scenery-chewing focus of his projects, was eager to co-star in a movie with Crosby. Veteran screenwriters Norman Panama and Mel Frank were brought in to give Kaye more laughs than were intended for the dancing Astaire.

Clooney confirms stories that Kaye was somewhat miffed by Crosby's disinterest in becoming buddies with him off the set. Some report that it was Kaye who convinced a reluctant Crosby to do the campy reprise of Clooney and Vera-Ellen's number, "Sisters." Kaye was so over-the-top in one take that Crosby got silly and starting laughing and clowning - knowing that it could be never used. Director Michael Curtiz ("Casablanca" and "Mildred Pierce") loved the spontaneity and convinced him to use it in the picture.

George Chakiris (who would go on to win an Oscar in "West Side Story") didn't have a single line in the movie, but established himself as a Hollywood hottie and began receiving fan mail by virtue of a single close-up in a musical number with Clooney.

In Clooney's wry yet affectionate commentary for the DVD version, she conjures up memories of the mercurial costume designer Edith Head's participation and certain Bingisms ("a slam-bang finish" and "you sold me") that were ad libbed by Crosby into the finished movie.

The movie critics - whose opinion about an unabashedly sentimental holiday movie mattered even less then than it does now - compared the

Bing tells Rosie to count her blessings

movie unfavorably with "Holiday Inn." Some claimed that it was simply a rip-off of Curtiz's 1951 movie, "I'll See You in My Dreams." That didn't stop audiences. "White Christmas" became the top-grossing movie of 1954 and has remained a TV perennial.

It may not reach the heights of "It's A Wonderful Life," but "White Christmas" still ends with the boys getting the girls, a hearty chorus or two of "Gee, I Wish I Was Back in the Army" and Irving Berlin's most famous song this side of "God Bless, America." It's what Bing would call a slam-bang finish.

JOHN G. EKIZIAN

Editor: As I mentioned in my editorial, I suppose that it is unfortunate that so many people now are only aware of Bing in connection with the song and film "White Christmas" but at least because of this, they do know about Bing and have the opportunity to learn more. Nice articles such as the one above by John G. Ezikian would not have been written without the film and the Daily Mail in London had a similar theme on December 26 when it asked five of its writers to choose their own personal favourite festive films. Films selected by the writers were "The Wizard of Oz", "Lady and the Tramp", "It's a Wonderful Life", "Groundhog Day" and, of course, you know what! Christopher Matthew looked at:

White Christmas

THE AMERICANS have a genius for films that make you blub - even when you've seen them dozens of times before and you're determined to resist blatant emotional manipulation and remain stiff-lipped throughout. The final Christmas Day scene in *The Glenn Miller Story* when June Allyson switches on the wireless and hears Glenn's band playing Little Brown Jug, knowing that he has already been lost over the Channel, finishes me off me every time.

Same thing when Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye come on at the end of *White Christmas* with Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen - all dressed in daft Santa costumes - and croon the biggest selling Christmas number of all times.

These days the prospect of a white Christmas in some parts of Britain is about as remote as a tropical heatwave in February. However; when I was much younger and a showing of *White Christmas* on the telly was as traditional a feature of the festivities as the Queen's Speech, dreaming of a white Christmas was nothing like the outlandish notion it is now.

My dreams never did come true, mind. The countryside remained as brown and featureless as Vermont during most of the film. But it was usually cold enough, the sky threatened snow and often delivered well before the New Year.

You knew where you were with Christmas in those days; Christmas Eve especially. For me it followed the same reassuring pattern: a short, light-hearted morning stint in the ad agency where I worked, followed by a noisy lunchtime gathering in the pub, and thence to the silence of Norfolk. There I would find my mother hard at work in the kitchen, the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols on the wireless, a log fire burning in the drawing room and, after tea, *White Christmas* on the telly.

If you can't be soppy and sentimental at Christmas when can you? And a soppier and more sentimental story than this 1954 old chestnut about two all-singing, all-dancing ex-army buddies. Bob and Phil, following the all-singing, all-dancing Haynes sisters to the Columbia ski lodge, and finding that the owner is none other than their beloved old commanding officer, General Waverly.

Realising that he is struggling to keep the place going, they decide to put on a show right there themselves. The general arrives to find the place filled with the men from his old outfit. The lump quivers ominously in the throat, and I can generally survive the opening lines of the title song, dry-eyed. But then the doors at the back of the stage slide open to reveal that the New England landscape has been transformed into a winter wonderland. The long-awaited skiing season will soon be under way. The general's bacon has been saved. Danny loves Vera-Ellen, Rosemary loves Bing.

The camera pulls back. Everyone is singing and raising glasses. The music swells and so, inevitably, do the tear ducts 'May your days be merry and bright / And may all your Christmases be white.'
I'll drink to that, and, as the credits roll, I usually do.

Christopher Matthew

". . . I'll die a happy man."

Peter Monaghan sent me a cutting from a February edition of the Glasgow Herald in which sports writer Graham Spiers was paying a tribute to a former colleague, Ian "Dan" Archer, who had just passed away. Part of this concerns Bing as follows:

> Dan's other favourite incident, often recalled to me in glee while we sat through some turgid match at Ibrox, was the great gaffe STV (Scottish Television) perpetrated over his Bing Crosby interview.
>
> Crosby had abruptly shown up at Gleneagles at some point in 1976, whereupon Dan, along with a television crew was despatched to interview him. Of the many prized comments Crosby delivered to Dan on film was the following: "I love golf. If I ever die on a golf course, at least I'll die a happy man."
>
> Eight months later (sic), Crosby died while playing golf. Reading this in the press, Dan leapt to his feet to alert STV.
>
> "Get that film out; we've got a great line on this!" he told a producer. It was to Dan's eternal amusement that, in the bowels of Cowcaddens, the canister containing the Crosby interview was duly recovered with the words "Crosby interview" scored out and replaced with "Curling from Crossmyloof".
>
> "His last ever interview! Crosby's last ever interview and the ****** erased it!" said Dan in contortions of laughter.

BING IN THE USA

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, our Christmas was rather subdued this past season. The busy throngs at the shopping malls and the unceasing advertisements on television just seemed to be a little out-of-place this past year. My wife, Laura, and I preferred to experience a quieter time for a change, which we thought to be only appropriate under the circumstances.

During the holiday period, I found myself thinking often of my favorite Bing Crosby Christmas song, one that grows in its appeal as each year goes by. And no, I'm not referring to "White Christmas", despite my continued enjoyment of Bing's most popular recording. Instead, my personal favorite is his version of "I'll Be Home For Christmas". I well remember listening to Bing on a small portable radio as a young teenager back during the days of World War II, when he first introduced this simple, heart-warming song to the public. With just a quiet guitar accompaniment, Bing's restrained delivery of the brief chorus of this new Christmas song was, to my ears, not only completely appropriate to the mood of the times but also an extremely moving experience which I have never forgotten.

I also remember knowing instantly - without the slightest doubt - half way through Bing's first chorus that the final words of the song just had to be "...if only in my dreams." That realization was, and still remains, one of my most poignant memories as a Crosby collector, almost six decades later.

So you can imagine my surprise and pleasure when I opened my newspaper this past Christmas morning to discover that the lead editorial in The *Washington Post* was about Bing and "I'll Be Home For Christmas". It is a rare experience these days to find such an appreciative mention of Bing in any kind of publication, let alone a major newspaper editorial.

Those of us who lived through World War II remember only too well why Bing was known then as "Uncle Sam Without Whiskers", and it was songs like "I'll Be Home For Christmas" that had a lot to do with that. Many servicemen and women could never be "home" at holiday time in those years, and many more were unable to do so again this past season. But once more, Bing's recording of this Christmas classic reached out to many people around the world as the winter days of December came upon us. And it will ever be thus.

The Christmas Day editorial just as it appeared in The *Washington Post,* is reproduced opposite to illustrate further that Bing Crosby remains a warm part of our lives, even in the age of so-called "modern pop music". At least a lot of people still think so, and I am proud to be one of them.

ANOTHER DELIGHTFUL LETTER FROM HELEN TOLTON

Helen Tolton, our fellow ICC member from Lakeport, California, has written me another delightful letter about her lifelong love and admiration for Bing, which I would like once again to share with everyone. Now almost 88 years young, Helen was fortunate enough to be introduced to Bing's vocal magic while she was still a teenager. And she was blessed with such an excellent musical ear, that she was able to identify Bing's voice even before she knew his name, as you will read in her letter.

"Dear Wig,

The BING magazine (Winter issue) was, as always, beautiful. I love the back cover. I remember when Bing looked like that. Too bad it doesn't give the year, probably around 1931.

I hope you are keeping well. I am okay, but this has been a very cold winter so far. That is, for California. Last Sunday, it even snowed. The mountains are still packed with it.

You made my previous letter to you read better than it was. But it was spontaneous, joyful and straight from the heart. But I have to make one little correction. I did not start collecting Bing's records in 1929. I became a Bing fan in 1929. But I was only 15 years old, still at home, and going to high school. Back in 1929, nobody had any money to buy anything. It was towards the end of the 1930's when my late husband and I did start to collect Bing's records. We always said that we, each, fell in love with Bing, and then fell in love with each other. Our entire lives were devoted, and dedicated, to Bing.

If you are interested in the way I became such a fan, in 1929, I used to baby sit for a young couple. They didn't have much in the way of furniture, but they had a gorgeous, big, radio phonograph console, plus a complete set of all the old Paul Whiteman records. And (would you believe?) they gave me permission to play them. And I fell in love with the singing voice on them. The only name the voice had on the records was "Vocal Refrain." It wasn't until 1930-31, when Bing was with Gus Arnheim at the Cocoanut Grove, that I found out who Bing was. The very first time that I heard him, I knew, instantly, that was that voice!

Well, I've rambled on much too long, so will close. My ICC dues are enclosed, plus a wee bit more. "Bing can use it".

Sincerely,

Helen Tolton"

What a lovely remembrance of Bing's early days as the anonymous "vocal refrain" on Paul

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2001

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Christmas 2001

THE CROONER'S classic "I'll Be Home for Christmas" is, admittedly, corny, commercial and dated. It is also, in the current atmosphere, poignant, powerful and of the moment. The most likely place to hear it is in the supermarket. Next time, take your mind off the unit price of canned cranberries for a minute and listen to the lyrics.

"I'll Be Home . . ." was introduced by Bing Crosby in 1943. Americans were scattered all over the world—in North Africa, Italy, England, on Pacific islands and ships at sea, practically anywhere on the globe one aimed a pointer. The song captured the longing—both here and in all those places abroad—for normality, warmth and family, and it carried an unkeepable promise: "I'll be home for Christmas/You can plan on me/Please have snow and mistletoe/And presents on the tree."

For the Americans in cold tents and caves in Central Asia this winter, and for those working difficult and often dangerous double shifts day after day on ships and in airplanes in faraway places, Christmas 2001 is more transportable than it was in 1943. There is e-mail for many, the telephone, TV and radio to make contact with home, and military kitchens doing their best to replicate the home-front stuffing. But it is, at bottom, a sort of virtual Christmas, which is to say not quite there.

The people who enter into what they and their families still tend to call "the service" don't always think they'll really be doing that much serving. They may be looking for a bit of excitement, or need the job or like the uniform. They learn over time—those who stick with it—that the country asks a great deal of them, more from some than it will ever repay. The true rewards prove to be in pride and the regard of one's fellow service men and women, and that is considerable.

But some days away can be longer than others. On this one, the thoughts of people doing the serving will be of home, and it's a time when the country's thoughts should be with them as well. "Christmas Eve will find me/Where the lovelight gleams," goes the up-to-date song from 1943. "I'll be home for Christmas/If only in my dreams."

Whiteman's 78 rpm Victor and Columbia records. And how impressive it was for Helen to be able to distinguish Bing's voice from all of the other singers on those recordings. And then to finally recognize Bing as himself when he appeared at the Cocoanut Grove in 1930-31. An experience to be well and truly treasured after all these years.

I would like to thank Helen Tolton for sharing these insights into her love for Bing with us. And, contrary to her concern about having "rambled on much too long", I sincerely hope that Helen will be willing to share more of her recollections of Bing's earliest years with us in a future issue of BING.

BING!
CROSBY AND AMERICAN CULTURE
November 14, 15, 16, 2002
HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY
HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK 11549

THE HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE

On December 7th, my wife, Laura and I took an Amtrak train from Virginia to New York to attend

another planning meeting at Hofstra University's campus in Hempstead, Long Island for the academic conference on Bing's life and career which will be held there this coming November (Thursday, Friday and Saturday, November 14, 15 and 16, 2002).

After arriving at Penn Station in downtown Manhattan, we transferred to the Long Island Rail Road for the hour-long trip out to Hempstead (with a quick change of trains at Jamaica, Long Island), followed by a five-minute taxi ride to the Hofstra University campus. That evening, we stayed overnight at the nearby Quality Hotel in the town of Hempstead, before returning to Virginia the next day. Comments about accommodations and transportation arrangements for the conference in November follow below.

The Planning Meeting

The four-hour meeting was held at Hofstra Hall, the original academic building on the university campus, which dates back to 1904 and originally served as the country home of Mr. and Mrs. William Hofstra, whose charitable bequests led to the founding of Hofstra College (later Hofstra University) in 1935.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Ruth Prigozy, Professor of English and Film Studies at Hofstra, who is serving as the Bing Crosby Conference Director. Participants included well-known authors Gary Giddins and Will Friedwald, who are both very active on the New York music scene; Professor Walter Raubicheck of the English Department at New York's Pace University; fellow ICC members Ken Gray from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Martin McQuade from Brooklyn, New York; plus various Hofstra University staff members, including Natalie Datloff, Director of Conferences and Symposia, Jo Ellen Ryan, Special Assistant to the Director, and David Christman, Director of the Hofstra Museum.

Discussions during the afternoon centered on overall plans for the Bing Crosby conference, particularly major personalities to be invited, special presentations and performances which might be scheduled during the three-day conference, and the establishment of an official collection of Crosby memorabilia which will be on display at the University library during the conference. Other discussions focused on proposed academic papers which had been submitted to that date, and the nature of the Saturday evening banquet which will constitute the official closure of the conference in November.

It became apparent during the long and spirited discussions which took place during the afternoon that, while many aspects of the conference are beginning to fall into place, much work still needs to be done before November rolls around. A further meeting may be scheduled at Hofstra later this Spring or Summer to finalize those arrangements that remain to be settled, if that is decided to be advisable.

Transportation To Hofstra

For those ICC members planning to attend the Bing Crosby conference from the East Coast area, perhaps the easiest way to travel would be by train to New York's Penn Station and then by the Long Island Rail Road to Hempstead, as Laura and I did on this occasion. The LIRR trains leave directly from Penn Station itself. You don't even have to go outside, just walk across the interior concourse and take the steps down to the LIRR tracks. LIRR trains leave for Hempstead about once an hour, and the total trip takes about 50 minutes, including the mandatory change of trains at Jamaica, Long Island. A separate LIRR train also leaves periodically for Hempstead from the Flatbush Avenue station in Brooklyn (also requiring a change at Jamaica). A round trip ticket on the LIRR costs about $8.00, with a discount for senior citizens.

ICC members who fly in from the West Coast or overseas should arrive either at John F. Kennedy International Airport or at La Guardia Airport, both of which are actually located out on Long Island itself. The Hofstra campus is approximately 30 minutes by taxi or limousine service from either airport. As there are no set fares for transportation from the airports, participants should confirm the rates payable with their drivers before starting the trip to Hofstra.

Official Hotels

There will be two official Long Island hotels designated by Hofstra University for the Bing Crosby conference. Blocks of rooms will be set aside for conference participants, and ICC members should identify themselves as such when making their reservations. Complimentary transportation will be arranged between these two hotels and the Hofstra campus, and schedules will be available at the hotel desks.

Long Island Marriott Hotel And Conference Center

This is a first-class hotel located at 101 James Doolittle Boulevard in the nearby town of Uniondale, New York 11553. The official guests and participants at the conference will be housed here. Accommodations and restaurant facilities at the Marriott are said to be excellent and, therefore, can be recommended. The room rate at the Marriott Hotel is expected to be $155.00 per night, for single or double occupancy (but subject to possible change by November). Reservations at the Marriott Hotel can be made by telephone at (516) 794-3800 or (800) 832-6255, and must be secured by a major

credit card. The deadline for reservations will be one month before the opening date for the conference, or October 13, 2002.

Laura and I plan on staying at the Marriott Hotel during the Bing Crosby conference. Since this will be a once-in-a-lifetime event, we believe that it will be more than worth the price to enjoy a first class hotel while we are at Hofstra.

Quality Hotel And Convention Center

This is a second class hotel which clearly has seen better days. Laura and I stayed here when we attended the meeting at Hofstra in December. It is located at 80 Clinton Street, in the center of Hempstead, New York 11550. While our room was acceptable, the restaurant dinner menu was very limited and the service was quite poor. The hotel restaurant was not even open for breakfast the next morning.

The advantage of the Quality Hotel is its low room rate, which is expected to be only $79.00 per night, for single or double occupancy (but subject to possible change by November). If they wish, ICC members who choose to stay at the Quality Hotel can arrange to have their meals on the Hofstra University campus instead, where several acceptable dining facilities are available.

Reservations at the Quality Hotel can be made by telephone at (516) 486-4100 or (800) 343-7950, and must be secured by a major credit card. The deadline for reservations will be one month before the opening date for the conference, or October 13, 2002.

Shopping

ICC spouses who might wish to consider doing their Christmas shopping during the three days of the Hofstra conference can easily take the Long Island Rail Road trains back to Manhattan for that purpose. In addition, I have learned that there is a major shopping mall only a 15-minute taxi ride from the Hofstra campus which features branches of several major New York City department stores, that might be even more convenient.

Known as the Roosevelt Field Shopping Mall, it boasts a special historical claim-to-fame. I understand that Roosevelt Field was the airport from which Charles Lindbergh took off on his record-breaking, non-stop flight from New York to Paris, back when Bing was still an unknown vocalist with Paul Whiteman. Now who wouldn't want to shop at such an historic location while they are visiting Long Island?

With Thanks

In addition to the information provided by Ruth Prigozy and Natalie Datloff about arrangements and facilities for the forthcoming Bing Crosby conference, I also would like to thank fellow ICC member Edwin Garcia of New York City, who sent me additional details for this article, including various maps and transportation schedules for the LIRR trains which provide service to and from Manhattan and Hempstead.

It really is not all that difficult to get to Hofstra from New York City, if you allow yourself enough time to do so. I sincerely believe that attending the Bing Crosby conference will be well worth the effort and expense, and Laura and I hope to see many of you there in November.

ANDROMEDA (1984-2002)

ICC members who have enjoyed receiving photographs of our beloved gray cat, Andromeda, (along with Laura and myself) as a special feature of our annual Christmas cards, will be saddened to learn that our faithful friend of almost 18 years passed away quietly in her sleep on February 3, 2002.

Andromeda had not been well for some time, and she had moved permanently into our kitchen, where Laura prepared a special paper box for her, in which she spent her last few months with us.

Our home is very quiet these days, and Laura and I keep listening and looking for Andromeda to appear from time to time. This will be especially true when the day comes for us to begin preparing

envelopes for mailing out this issue of BING to everyone. In the past, whenever Laura and I would set up shop at our dining room table to work on shipping magazines, books, calendars or compact discs, Andromeda liked nothing better than to join us at the table and climb into boxes and sit on the stacks of envelopes and papers in order to "help" us with our work on behalf of the ICC.

Andromeda was such a delightful companion of our "golden years" for so long that our home now feels very different without her presence. Those ICC members who share their own homes with pets will appreciate why I wanted to write a few words of remembrance about Andromeda for this issue of BING. And I hope that others will accept these thoughts in the spirit in which they have been written.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins
February 10, 2002

(Editor: All of us with pets will identify with Wig's feelings and perhaps empathise with the story of the pet who "helps" with a task.

Wig is doing a great job on our behalf with the Hofstra seminar and the details given are most helpful to those of us planning a trip to the event.)

Out of this World

The Associated Press on December 16 issued a report on the return of the astronauts on the space shuttle Endeavour and how nice it was to read the following, which links in nicely with some of Wig's thoughts:

> *Mission Control awakened Culbertson, Dezhurov, Tyurin and the four other astronauts aboard Endeavour on Sunday with a recording of Bing Crosby singing "I'll Be Home for Christmas."*

Also, anyone in the USA who watched ABC's "General Hospital" in December would have seen a very touching reminder of Bing, when one of the show's characters turned on the radio and heard Bing singing "Silent Night." Then she tuned to another station only to hear "White Christmas," then again to another wavelength, to hear "I'll be home for Christmas." Finally she gave up, and that song was playing through the remainder of the scene.

Bing honoured in San Diego

We were very pleased to learn from Dave Miller, the Artistic Director of the San Diego Chapter of the S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. (Barbershop Quartet Society) that they selected Bing as the subject of their 2002 annual show. Dave wrote:

"The life of Bing Crosby will be recounted live on stage in San Diego April 13th 2002, (2 shows). The venue is the wonderful East County Center for the performing Arts in nearby El Cajon. The show will feature over thirty songs he made famous and will be presented by the Sun Harbor Barbershop Chorus and Quartets (and various solo's and duets). We intend to do a three act presentation. Act 1 is the 1945 Academy Awards, Act 2 is a live radio Show from the Del Mar Racetrack circa 1946, and Act 3 is a spoof on Ralph Edwards's *This is Your Life* circa 1970."

We look forward to a report on the show in due course.

Bing's song inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame

An eclectic range of classic records including Bob Dylan's first full-blown rock album "Highway 61 Revisited" and crooner Bing Crosby's "Swinging On A Star" were inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame on February 14. Bob Dylan's 1965 album, which marked his transformation from folk icon to rock troubadour, and Bing's forties pop tune were among 55 recordings to receive Hall of Fame awards this year. Others included Willie Nelson's breakthrough album "Red Headed Stranger" from 1975, Sammy Davis Junior's 1962 version of "What Kind Of Fool Am I" and Nat King Cole's 1946 rendering of "Route 66".

The 15 albums and 40 singles honoured at the lavish ceremony in Los Angeles brings to 585 the total number of titles recognised since 1973 by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences for their enduring artistic quality and cultural influence.

BING! Cherries

Steven Lewis advised us in January that two men, Owen-Pahl Greene and David Giardinae, have written a play for an off-Broadway show called "BING! Cherries, the Bing Crosby Musical," which is about Bing's life and music. It is a two hour show consisting of three singers, a pianist, bassist and second electronic keyboard. The show is planning a Spring opening in Manhattan. Owen sent a copy of the script to Steven who duly passed it to Gary Giddins and your Editor to review and comment on it for accuracy and style. This was duly done and we hope that the show will soon surface in New York.

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gerry Atkinson, 7 Plecy Close, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 8QL, UK

WANTED on VHS video (UK format)
1. Bing Crosby - His Life & Legend [1978]
2. Parkinson Show with Johnny Mercer
3. Parkinson Show with Perry Como
4. Song by Song on Alan Jay Lerner, narrated by Ned Sherrin [Yorkshire TV 1980]

Willing to pay good price for high quality copy or for loan of original to make own copy. Please phone: 01202 897398

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE, UK

Arthur has produced a new stamp (see below) plus matching key ring for members' use. Stamps cost £3 for 20 including postage to UK members. USA members can order from Wig Wiggins, price $5 for 20. The key ring costs £2.50.

Also Arthur has produced a coloured A4 sized (approx. 8" by 11.5") collage of the stamps he has produced in recent times.This collage has been produced as a limited issue of 250 and costs £3 for UK members and $5 for US and Canadian readers. Contact Arthur direct in the UK and Wig in the USA and Canada. The collage would look lovely in a frame.

Peter Burgis, PO Box 1660, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444, Australia (e-mail : musikman@optusnet.com.au)

Peter is offering for sale SHEET MUSIC, fine condition copies from England, United States and Australia, all original copies, many with colourful decorative covers, often featuring portraits of early entertainers and composers. Song subjects cover Motion Pictures (both silents & talkies), Broadway Shows, Cowboy, Music Hall, Aviation, Radio, Military, Sporting, Jazz, Blues, Minstrels, Cartoons, Disney, Patriotic, Political, Television, Ballads and Pop Songs. Some Bing and associate artists (Whiteman, Jolson, Cantor, Garland, Hope & Lamour, Armstrong, etc.) included. New lists available each fortnight through the Internet auction site www.ebay.com Search by sellers "ozmusikman" and "ozburg" or E-mail: musikman@optusnet.com.au

All covers offered are scanned and available for viewing (in glorious colour). Memorable music for playing, studying, or displaying. Most of the sheets are from 1890-1960 in lovely condition.

W. H. Ewert, Wood Nymph, 7 Elfin Drive, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 9QG, UK (tel. 01202 892986)

Bill has decided to sell his extensive collection of recorded music, namely:

1. Two Maxell 7" quarter track tapes of 250 Bing radio recordings with Buddy Cole and very occasionally Rosemary Clooney and Lindsay Crosby plus 16 parodies as used on the Ford Road Shows. All recorded on a ReVox Tape Recorder at $3^3/4$". Hardly played.

£27 including inland postage.

2. Seven Agfa 7" reel tapes quarter track of 110 Bing Chesterfield radio shows with various guest artists and all of very good quality

£60. Postage extra.

3. Seven CDs *The Chronological Bing Crosby* JZCD 11.12,13 and 14. Also *The Story of Bing Crosby* Deja Vu DVRECD16 and *Some Fine Old Chestnuts* and *New Tricks* MCAMCLD 19377.

£27, including inland postage.

4. Also available are approximately 370 Reel to Reel 7" tapes of melodious musical tunes of Operatic Arias, Gilbert & Sullivan, Military & Brass Bands, Big Bands, Swing Bands, Jazz & several laughable radio shows. Singers such as Sinatra, Como, Dean & Tony Martin, Ella, Dinah Shore, Peggy Lee, Doris Day etc. etc. Plus almost everything recorded by Bing, including approx. 60 albums and a boxed set and a card index of his recordings. There are two books listing 267 of the tapes contents, most of the rest are labelled with their contents and all are housed in a purpose built mahogany cabinet. Purchaser would be responsible for transporting them but at the same time and before purchase could have the opportunity of listening to them for quality.

£850.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel: [952] 470-2172, e-mail: FesFilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall's company has many Bing videos (NTSC only) available plus many Bing film poster reproductions. Contact Ron for details or look at the web site at www.fesfilms.com

Brian Jones, 1 Gellihaf Rd., Fleur De Lis, Blackwood, Gwent NP12 3UY, Wales.

Wanted

The Bing Crosby LP-ography, published by the ICC in 1977.

Keel Row Books, 11 Fenwick Terrace, Preston Rd., North Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE29 0LU, UK (Tel. 0191-296-0664, if phoning from outside UK dial 0044 -191-296-0664)

The proprietor, Bob Cook, was a major purchaser at the John Joyce auction which is described elsewhere in the magazine. He has many copies from "The Crosby Collection" series of books by Fred Reynolds, a copy of "The Road to Bing Crosby", several copies of "The Road to Hollywood", copies of the Ken Barnes book "The Crosby Years" and at least one copy of "The Story of Bing Crosby" by Ted Crosby. He also bought many records and some sheet music. Contact him with details of your wants.

Michael B. Schnurr, 22449 Lake Rd., #110, Rocky River, Ohio 44116, USA (e-mail: mbschnurr@msn.com)

Large list of Bing Crosby video available for sale/trade. Other video lists available on Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Julie Andrews, Peggy Lee, Andy Williams and a huge list covering many others like Dean Martin, Dinah Shore, Tony Bennett, etc. (NTSC, PAL and SCAM)

Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6QA, UK (tel. 01708 445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS (UK format) video items and film song compilations of Bing that may be of interest. SAE for lists please.

BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail Erinssmile@earthlink.net - Web Site address http://home.earthlink.net/~erinssmile/

The club has just celebrated its twentieth anniversary and it issues a sixteen page newsletter every two months. The annual subscription is $12 (USA) and $16 (outside the USA).

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(e-mail: ClubCrosby@aol.com)

The club issues a sixty page magazine twice a year. Subscriptions are $12 (USA and Canada) and $18 for Australia, New Zealand and South America. Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP - subscription £12.

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

The club issues a newsletter every two months and holds regular film nights. Last year they presented "Road to Utopia", "Too Much Harmony" and "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court".

Internet sites:
Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/~crosby/

This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby
http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES
We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, 10 Collingwood Drive, Mundesley, Norfolk NR11 8JB, UK (phone/fax: 01263 722818, e-mail: gerry.stonestreet@virgin.net)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £16.50 for the UK, £18.60 for Europe and £24 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card. Highly recommended.

Sinatra Music Society, c/o Margaret Cummings, 36 Hillcrest Rd., Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield B72 1EN, UK (tel: 0121-350-0683)

This Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis and includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The annual sub for UK members is £12. Web site address: www.sinatra-ms.com

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN, UK (phone: 01924402469)

Members receive four magazines per year. Subs are £7 UK, £10 Europe, $20 US and Japan.

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN, UK

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Mrs. Jutta Fagan, 13 Mayfair Court, Mayfair Close, The Ave, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5EL, UK

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email:tony@flias.globalnet.co.uk)

The Peggy Lee Fan Club, c/o Robert Strom, 744 Collier Drive, San Leandro CA 94577, USA (e-mail: peggyleefanclub@hotmail.com)

Members receive "FEVER", a quarterly newsletter. Fees $20 USA / $25 Overseas. Make your check or Money Order payable to Robert Strom.

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR, UK

BOOKS 'N' BING

1. What is surely the definitive discography of Bing's career is reviewed by Keith Parkinson.

BING CROSBY'S COMMERCIAL RECORDINGS: From 78s to CDs

by F. B. (Wig) Wiggins

The last issue of BING gave members of the ICC the opportunity to order copies of this book. Unfortunately, publication was delayed, mainly because of Jim Reilly's insistence that the finished product should not be lacking in any aspect of presentation. The wait was worthwhile. "Bing Crosby's Commercial Recordings" is a superior softback running to 150 plus pages printed on good quality paper and illustrated with dozens of record labels and sleeves, most of which would take pride of place in my own Crosby collection if only I knew where to obtain them.

It bears some resemblance to the long out of print four volume discography "The Road to Bing Crosby". Author Wig defines it as an "easy-to-use chronological reference guide" and it is that and more. Recording date, song title, matrix (and take) number, accompanist, original commercial release catalogue

number and CD reissue identification follow the established discographical format. In addition, composers are shown. The original release detail almost invariably shows the USA catalogue number although where a recording was first issued outside North America this information is readily found in the identification table in the book's preface along with the issuing record company.

There are three supplements to the main listing. A further chronological index lists "Other Commercial Recordings". This will confuse older collectors who are used to seeing the likes of "Blow, Gabriel, Blow" and "True Love" listed with Bing's mainstream studio recordings. However, Wig accurately sidelines those Crosby recordings made in the first instance for film soundtracks like the two examples given. This secondary index covers all recordings made initially for use in another medium. So the songs from "High Tor" also receive a listing under "Other Commercial Recordings". There is an "Index of Compact Discs" which is inevitably out of date as soon as the book reaches the printer. Nor can it contain the detail found in Jim Reilly's CD publications of Crosby's compact disc recordings, but it does list what was available as at the end of last year. Finally, an alphabetical index provides a short cut to finding any given recording. The index can also be used to track songs contained on some CD issues. On the subject of CDs, it is only when the year 1940 is reached in the main chronological listing that collectors can fully appreciate the sterling work of John McNicholas with his "Chronological Bing Crosby" CD series. Wig sets aside a page to give suitable credit to John. In addition the book is interleaved with pages providing such things as a useful at-a-glance listing of Bing's gold records, his top forty hits and the success of his recording of "White Christmas".

Even the most dedicated collector will find some revealing tit-bit in this definitive work. I was unaware that Columbia Records had commercially issued Bing's recording of "Alexander's Ragtime Band" from a 1968 television show. Or that his "Musical Autobiography" set for Decca had been released on 17 EP records in the USA.

"Bing Crosby's Commercial Recordings" is an affordable work of reference aimed at Crosby collectors. Buy a copy now and in five years' time it should be dog-eared after being regularly lifted from the bookshelf.

Keith Parkinson

(Editor: Stan White was another who wrote in praise of this excellent new book.

"Wig's book contains just about everything that it is possible to include in such a publication. I like the way in which the chronological number of each title is also used as the reference in the index. It is also pleasing to have the composer details for each song.

Jim Reilly has worked alongside Wig in compiling and publishing this discography and they deserve equal praise for a job well done. The printer also deserves credit for a well presented publication. I'll say no more except that it's more than a bargain at £10 including post and packing."

Contact Wig or Jim Reilly to obtain your copy.)

2. Greg Van Beek takes a look at a book in which I have more than a passing interest!

BING CROSBY: Day By Day

By Malcolm Macfarlane
Scarecrow Press ISBN: 0810841452 840 pages.
Release date: 15 December 2001

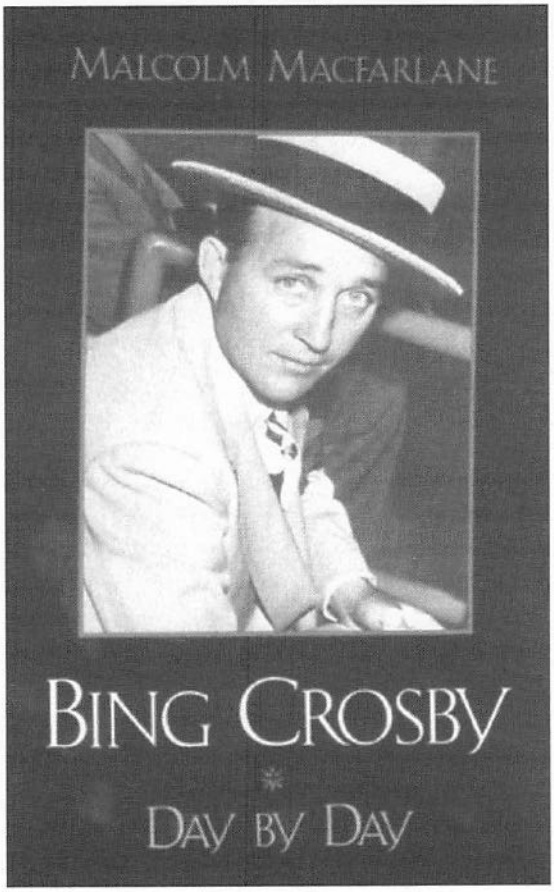
Make room in your libraries, fellow collectors. Here is a book you will most definitely want to add to them! For me, it was a wonderful way to end 2001, when this book arrived at my doorstep on New Year's Eve. The first thing that struck me upon opening the box is the sheer volume of it. At over 800 pages, there's a lot to peruse!

Without a doubt, this is the most comprehensive look at Bing Crosby's activities, literally on a "day by day" basis from his birth in 1903 to his death in 1977, that has ever been published. Malcolm Macfarlane, in what obviously was a labor of love, has painstakingly uncovered every bit of information on Bing's life that he could find. His attention to detail is impeccable.

To enhance the coverage of Bing's films, radio/TV, and stage performances, Malcolm utilizes countless reviews and press cuttings from various publications. The "show biz Bible", VARIETY, is often quoted, providing a time capsule effect to Bing's life and times. These reviews are, in essence, the history of show business for over half a century, further adding to the appeal of the book. Indeed this is a book that not only devoted (and casual) fans of Bing will treasure, but also those doing research on virtually any other performer of his era. Bing's path crossed with most of them, a fact proven by the extraordinarily detailed index.

Malcolm has also provided the reader with an updated version of Jim Reilly's "fact file", citing milestones of Bing's life. His forty top hit recordings, gold records, feature films, careers in radio and TV are all covered in a general manner. A discography is also provided, listing only the song titles and dates recorded, from 1926-77. Rejected and alternate takes have been omitted.

The only minor disappointment, and it entirely rests with the publisher, is the lack of illustrations to accompany the entries. As it stands, Scarecrow Press devoted a mere 16 pages out of over 800 total to photos. But don't let that deter you from purchasing this fabulous book. To be sure, this is a book the whole family can enjoy. I, for one, found it amusing to look up milestone dates in members of my family's lives, to see what activities Bing was involved with on those days. As a startling example, I found out that he and Kathryn were attending the wedding of Bob Hope's daughter Linda on January 11, 1969. My parents were married on the exact same date!



The book carries with it a rather hefty price tag, but make no fuss about it, you're getting a lot for your money. You should have no problem finding a copy, either online or through any of the larger booksellers throughout the United Kingdom and the United States. Happy reading - and learning!

Greg Van Beek

(Editor: My grateful thanks to Greg for his kind words. Keith Parkinson added an aside when sending his review of Wig's book.

> *"I haven't spoken to you since I was part way through reading your "Day by Day" book. Having now read it from cover to cover I feel it as important a publication as Gary Giddins' biography. It will certainly be within easy reach on my bookshelf to help checking my facts in subsequent Bing articles."*

I understand that the book is available from both Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Amazon is asking $85, but with free shipping on orders of $99 or more. Barnes & Noble's price is $68, and free shipping on orders of 2 or more items (USA only). The book can also be obtained from the publishers, Scarecrow Press, at 15200 NBN Way, P. O. Box 191, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214 [phone: 1-800-462-6420, web site: www.scarecrowpress.com]. Orders via the Internet receive a 15% discount on the price of $85.)

Bing Crosby - A Pocketful of Dreams

In our last issue, I mentioned that Amazon in the UK were advertising a paperback edition of the Gary Giddins book but when I ordered it I found that, as I had half suspected, it was an error. Certainly Gary himself knew nothing about it. However, the good news is that a paperback edition is to be issued in the USA in September. Gary is taking the opportunity to correct the handful of errors which crept into the first edition and he expresses his thanks to the ICC members who wrote to point some of these out. No news of volume 2 yet but Gary is working on it.

Guinness World Records: British Hit Singles

Brian Jones picked up the 1999 edition of this excellent annual publication at a jumble sale for just 10p earlier this year and he kindly forwarded the entry for Bing.

Bing CROSBY © *US, male vocalist* — **95 wks**

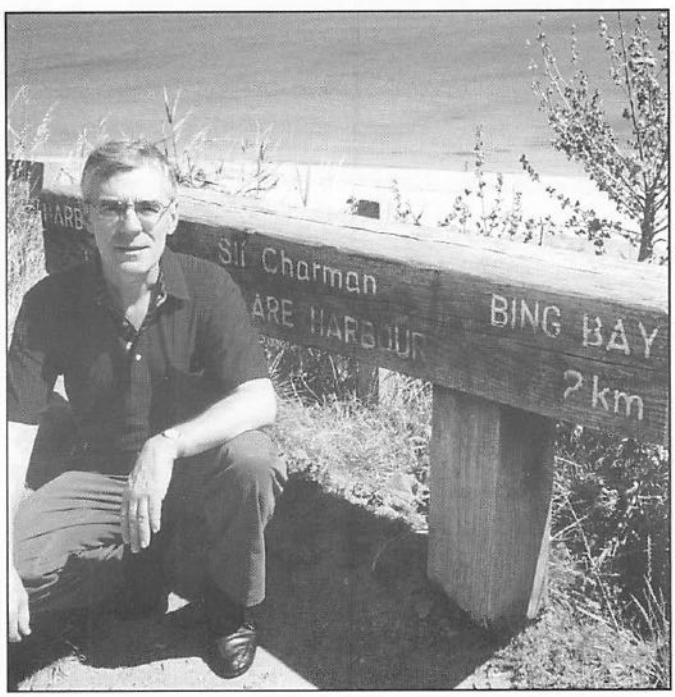
14 Nov 52	●	**ISLE OF INNISFREE** *Brunswick 04900*	3	12
5 Dec 52	●	**ZING A LITTLE ZONG** *Brunswick 04981* [1]	10	2
19 Dec 52	●	**SILENT NIGHT** *Brunswick 03929*	8	2
19 Mar 54	●	**CHANGING PARTNERS** *Brunswick 05244*	10	1
2 Apr 54	●	**CHANGING PARTNERS (re-entry)** *Brunswick 05244*	9	1
23 Apr 54		**CHANGING PARTNERS (2nd re-entry)** *Brunswick 05244*	11	1
7 Jan 55		**COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS** *Brunswick 05339*	18	1
21 Jan 55		**COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS (re-entry)** *Brunswick 05339*	11	2
29 Apr 55		**STRANGER IN PARADISE** *Brunswick 05410*	17	2
27 Apr 56		**IN A LITTLE SPANISH TOWN** *Brunswick 05543*	22	3
23 Nov 56	●	**TRUE LOVE** *Capitol CL 14845* [2]	4	27
24 May 57	●	**AROUND THE WORLD** *Brunswick 05674*	5	15
9 Aug 75		**THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT** *United Artists UP 35852*	41	4
3 Dec 77	●	**WHITE CHRISTMAS** *MCA 111* ◆	5	7
27 Nov 82	●	**PEACE ON EARTH – LITTLE DRUMMER BOY** *RCA BOW 12* [3]	3	8
17 Dec 83		**TRUE LOVE (re-issue)** *Capitol CL 315* [2]	70	3
21 Dec 85		**WHITE CHRISTMAS (re-issue)** *MCA BING 1*	69	2
19 Dec 98		**WHITE CHRISTMAS (re-issue)** *MCA MCSRD 48105*	29†	2

[1] Bing Crosby and Jane Wyman [2] Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly [3] David Bowie and Bing Crosby

Bear in mind that the UK charts did not start until 1952 when Bing's peak period was passing. The British Hit Singles book is heartily recommended as an invaluable reference work and it usually sells for around £14.99

Bing Bay

Derek and Dorothy Perkins were startled to come across a Bing Bay, near Rosslare Harbour in County Wexford, Ireland, last year. Dorothy recorded the event for posterity with her camera and here we see Derek kneeling in front of a sign for "Bing Bay". I wonder what the background was to its name? Was it named in honour of Bing?



Keith Parkinson's Celluloid Crosby

Herbert Marshall was no Bing Crosby. And Bing Crosby was no Clark Gable. Yet all three actors played a similar role in the Samson Raphaelson drama which Paramount owned. The studio bought the rights to the 1934 Broadway hit "Accent on Youth" and filmed it using the same title the following year with Marshall playing a successful playwright. Fifteen years on Arthur Sheekman was employed to tailor a suitable role for Bing in Paramount's investment. The playwright became Paul Merrick, successful songwriter. And by 1959 we have Gable playing the lead as a veteran stage producer in *But Not For Me*. The story was slight and in the case of *Mr. Music* the running time was long. At 113 minutes Paramount was striving for a movie with substance and the basic plot couldn't sustain what started life as a three act play that was originally adapted for the screen in a 77 minute version. Which is why Groucho Marx, Peggy Lee, The Merry Macs, Marge and Gower Champion and Dorothy Kirsten can be dropped from the film without hurting the plot. They were mere padding.

Apart from the Champions, all were musical colleagues of Bing. The Crosby relationship with the Merry Macs went back the furthest. They had first recorded with him in the summer of 1940 when the once heard never forgotten arrangement of "You Made Love You" was laid down. Five months later they returned to Decca's Los Angeles studio for a session which also involved brother Bob Crosby. By the time *Mr. Music* went before the cameras the three men and a girl mix that comprised the Macs had undergone two personnel changes but they successfully retained the sound which made them popular on radio as well as a recording group in their own right for Decca. Groucho had guested on Bing's "Philco Radio Time" programmes on three occasions whilst Peggy Lee, who had been a regular during the show's first series, was on more or less every other programme during the last season before it went off the air a few months before filming started on *Mr. Music*.

Which leaves Dorothy Kirsten. It has been pointed out to me that Miss Kirsten slipped through a gap in the alphabet when she was omitted from the Ks of my "A to Z" of Bing's films. A brief biography now will plug that gap. Born in 1910, she studied in Rome and made her debut as a soprano in "Manon" with the Chicago Grand Opera in 1940. Five years later she joined the Metropolitan Opera and remained linked to that prestigious company until a final performance as Tosca in 1975. During the era which concerns us here she was building a reputation as the acceptable side of light opera to listeners of popular music. Like Groucho and Peggy, she too had been checked out with guest appearances on Philco Radio Time. She made annual visits to the show in 1947, 1948 and 1949. She was what was known as a game girl when it came to duetting on popular songs. Her Philco experience involved joining Bing and Bert Lahr on a chorus or two of "Friendship". She was a regular guest on the radio shows of Al Jolson and Frank Sinatra. Just to show she was one of the boys, she duetted with the former on "Hello, My Baby" and the latter on "Baby, it's Cold Outside". Her singing blended well with popular male vocalists. The "New Grove Dictionary of Opera" summed it up nicely with the comment "a coolly assured voice that was employed with much sincerity if not with overwhelming effect." It was light opera which sold her recordings. In the 1960s she generated good sales for Capitol records when she was teamed with Gordon MacRae on a series of albums which embraced such musicals as "Kismet", "The Desert Song" and "The Student Prince". These found their way into the popular and classical racks in the record stores. Her full story was told in her 1982 autobiography "A Time to Sing". Dorothy passed away in 1992.

Dorothy Kirsten and Bing sing "Accidents Will Happen" in Mr. Music

Paramount's initial publicity indicated that filming would start in September of 1949 and one month before that proposed start date Tom Ewell was signed for the part of Cupcake. The following month the studio was looking for personalities so they could promote the film as an "all-star" production. Maurice Chevalier, Ethel Merman and Bert Lahr were mentioned to provide added marquee value. By then the husband and wife dancing team of Marge and Gower Champion had been signed up. By November of 1949 filming was underway. Nancy Olsen had been okayed by Bing as his leading lady. In control on the set was actor Richard Haydn, who had graduated to directing the previous year. In 1947 he'd made *Sitting Pretty* and as the prissy Mr. Belvedere he was assured movie immortality for the scene where a child actor upended a bowl of porridge on his head. In fact, Haydn couldn't totally shake off the acting bug and he played a cameo role in *Mr. Music* when he claimed acting credit under the name Claude Curdle. If you want to study his performance, he is Jerome Thisbee. He appears as a backer of Paul Merrick's new show. He comes up with $300 in the mistaken belief that it is enough to allow the show to be staged. The actual amount needed is $300,000. But Thisbee is an honourable man and when he discovers his mistake he offers a cheque for the fall amount. Also making appearances of sort were Bing's regular film songwriters. Framed photographs of Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen hang on the wall of Bing's apartment.

The plot around which the film was built stars Bing as the lazy songwriter Paul Merrick. He'd rather play golf than meet writing deadlines. The bills remain unpaid despite the efforts of his secretary, played by Nancy Olsen. Of course, Bing does eventually write that hit musical. He also walks off with Nancy as the closing credits come up.

This was not one of Bing's more popular films either critically or with his fans. His box-office star waned as the 1950s progressed. Only *Road to Bali, White Christmas* and *High Society* had the dollar earning impact that Hollywood took for granted during the previous two decades. Even so, in the year of the release of *Mr. Music* Bing was placed third in the "Motion Picture Herald" list of the top ten box office stars.

In later years, a couple of fellow performers came up with amusing memories about working with Bing on *Mr. Music*. Tom Ewell was learning the acting game when he approached Bing and explained that he felt tense and wondered how to achieve the relaxed Crosby manner. "The groaner grinned", related Ewell, "then he pulled out a roll of bills big enough to choke a horse, patted it gently and said: 'This sort of helps!'" Groucho Marx remembered, "It was embarrassing because I sing better than Bing. Otherwise we get along fine together.... I usually wait until he gets off the set before I start singing, because I don't want to embarrass him. We appear as a couple of ancient vaudevillians. I require very little make-up."

Groucho shows Bing how to do it!

I'll end with some critiques of the film. The trade press were usually kind. They depended on the advertising revenue of the Hollywood studios. "Film Daily" was cool without risking the wrath of Paramount: "Artfully contrived romance, with music and comedy. Bing in fine voice. Performance ingratiating. Roundly rewarding show for anybody's money." More recent reviews to help you decide whether or not to catch a television screening are a little more honest. "The Radio Times Guide to Films" had this to say: "The film under the direction of prissy comic actor Richard Haydn is even more laid back than its star. It's also far too long for its flimsy subject matter." Leslie Halliwell, in his "Filmgoer's Companion", called it "a bland musical remake with pleasant performances". I won't attempt a personal criticism. I'll pose a simple question instead. How does the composer of such distinctly unhummable songs as "And You'll be Home", "Wouldn't it be Funny" and "Wasn't I There" manage to write crowd pulling musicals? Perhaps Paul Merrick should take a Johnny Burke-James Van Heusen song writing course!

Keith Parkinson

MANDER, MILES (1888-1946) Actor, producer, director, novelist, playwright, film exhibitor and screenwriter. There is a scene towards the end of *Road to Singapore* (1940) where an irate dignitary, Sir Malcolm Drake, finds his suit ruined by 'Spotto', the miracle cleanser being touted by Bing and Bob. That victim is played by Miles Mander. By 1940 Mander was winding down after spending the last twenty years of his life involved with half a dozen different jobs connected with entertainment. And before that he had been a sheep-farmer in New Zealand! Born in Wolverhampton in the UK, he arrived in Hollywood in 1935, leaving behind a legacy of British films on which he had made his mark as actor, screenwriter or director - sometimes all three at the same time. The film capital provided him with a constant stream of roles, none of them major. He is best remembered as Benjamin Disraeli in the 1938 film *Suez*. After *Road to Singapore* he alternated between bit parts in "A" pictures like *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945) and more important roles in less important films such as the two Sherlock Holmes mysteries *The Scarlet Claw* and *Pearl of Death* both made in 1944.

MANDY Song. This was just one of sixteen songs written by Irving Berlin and used in the 1954 movie *White Christmas*. It began to earn royalties for Berlin in 1918, the year in which it featured in "Yip Yip Yaphank". The following year it found success in the "Ziegfeld Follies of 1919". In 1934 Eddie Cantor sang it in the film *Kid Millions*. Several recordings kept it before the listening public before Paramount used it in *White Christmas*. It crops up twice in that film and gives Bing the chance to duet with first Danny Kaye and then Rosemary Clooney. When Decca came to record Berlin's score for issue as a long playing record it became part of a medley with Danny Kaye again duetting with Bing. A solo version was recorded by Bing with Buddy Cole for 1950s radio.

MANKIEWICZ, JOSEPH L(eo) (1909-1993) Director, producer and screenwriter. One of the great Hollywood talents associated with Bing, JLM was coming to the end of his time as a writer of material for others to direct when he delivered *Too Much Harmony* (1933) to Paramount. He'd held a job with that studio since 1929. By the mid-thirties they had recognised his worth and made him a producer. But Mankiewicz knew his future lay in literate and intelligent films which would find their way onto critics 'all time best' lists through to the next century. He explained his move to directing when he said, "I felt the urge to direct because I couldn't stomach what was being done to what I wrote". He won Oscars for the screenplay and direction of *A Letter to Three Wives* in 1949. The same thing happened the next year for *All About Eve*. He was one of the few people who made Shakespeare accessible to the masses when he directed Marlon Brando in *Julius Caesar* in 1953. He collaborated with the bard on that one. By 1955 he felt that he could tackle a musical and he worked on the screenplay of *Guys and Dolls* as well as directing it. After many years when it seemed he was incapable of putting a foot wrong he walked into a disaster. It was *Cleopatra* (1963). His last film was the entertaining *Sleuth* (1972). He didn't get to write the screenplay on that one but by way of compensation he was provided with the acting talents of Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine as the film's two main (and only) characters.

MANONE, JOSEPH MATTHEW "WINGY" (1904-1982) Trumpeter, vocalist and bandleader. Wingy was on screen in just one Crosby picture. He and his band were used in *Rhythm on the River* (1940). One sequence in that film is worth the price of admission or the cost of video rental. It occurs when Wingy and his musicians go with Bing to a pawnshop to redeem the band's musical instruments. They embark on a spirited and seemingly spontaneous rendition of the film's title song. And once you know that Wingy only has one arm it is impossible to ignore his trumpet playing technique whenever he is in the frame. He lost his right arm in a streetcar accident as a child. He did make other films. The titles of *Juke Box Jenny* (1942) and *Sarge Goes to College* (1947) go some way to explaining why they are long forgotten. His relationship with Bing was that of friend and professional colleague. He was a frequent guest on Bing's radio show between other engagements. These included working in Las Vegas where he died in 1982.

Bing and Wingy in Rhythm on the River

MARCH OF THE MOVIES Compilation film. Released in 1966, this Ben Lyon narrated support feature used two Crosby sequences from 1930 and 1931. He sings "When the Folks High Up do the Mean Low Down" with Bebe Daniels in the entire Crosby footage taken from *Reaching for the Moon*. Listeners to the BBC Light programme in the 1950s won't need reminding that Bebe Daniels was married to Ben Lyon. The other Crosby contribution to *March of the Movies* was a clip from the Sennett short *Dream House*. It was taken from towards the end of that film when Bing is shown being chased by a lion.

MARCH OF TIME Documentary news series. Every major Hollywood studio had its newsreels. Twentieth Century-Fox had Movietone News but in 1942 they obtained the rights to distribute "March of Time". Not as topical as the twice weekly

newsreels, these one-reel programme fillers usually concentrated on issues of the time. One edition was devoted to the contribution to the war effort of American entertainers and brief footage of Bing is included along with shots of Sinatra, Armstrong, Benny, Hope and other big crowd pullers and bond sellers of the early 1940s.

MARION, FRANCES (1888-1973) Screenwriter. By the time that Frances Marion provided the story basis for Donald Ogden Stewart's screenplay of *Going Hollywood* (1933) she was one of Hollywood's highest paid writers. She had well over one hundred screen credits when she tailored *Going Hollywood* for Marion Davies. When Davies was at her peak in the early 1920s, Frances Marion directed her in several successful films. So when the fading star was looking for a vehicle that would boost her popularity without taxing her acting skills, it was only natural to hire a colleague who understood her capabilities. Earlier in 1933 she had written the witty script of *Dinner at Eight* and in 1937 she provided the screenplays for *Camille* and *Knight Without Armour* before withdrawing from the Hollywood scene.

MARSHALL, E(verett) G. (1910- 1998) Actor. In *Man on Fire* (1957) Bing's lawyer is played by E.G. Marshall. It was a typical role for the dependable, forceful, determined character actor who must have been sent many scripts like that of *Man on Fire* simply because he was born to play solid, morally strong types. The younger generation will remember him as the righteous lawyer from the television series "The Defenders". Cinemagoers know him best as one of the *Twelve Angry Men* (1957) that fellow juror Henry Fonda converted to his way of thinking. Marshall began his film career in quality dramas like *The House on 92nd Street* (1945) and *Call Northside 777* (1948). Television claimed him when the more serious film roles for which he was best suited became few and far between.

MARSHALL, GEORGE (1891-1975) Director. Although he never directed a "proper" Crosby picture, Marshall was the man at the helm on *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942), *Variety Girl* (1946) and *Scared Stiff* (1953), three movies in which Bing was allocated a little screen time. They were not typical of the directorial assignments by which he is now remembered. He began as an actor at Universal in 1912. He was directing westerns by 1916 and full length talkies from 1932 onwards. Although he proved adept at bringing out the best with comedy actors - he worked with Laurel and Hardy, W. C. Fields and Bob Hope - he also directed some taut thrillers like *The Blue Dahlia* (1946). By the 1950s he was seen as being capable of working in most genres and turning out critically approved box office successes. *Houdini* (1953) proved that Tony Curtis was an actor as well as a teen idol. *Red Garters* (1954) was a stylised musical for Paramount that M-G-M would have been proud of. *The Sheepman* (1958) combined a traditional western storyline with humour. He should have retired whilst he was still being given quality assignments. Instead he carried on working until the end of the 1960s and rounded

Mary Martin with Bing in Rhythm on the River

out his directorial career with the dire *Wicked Dreams of Paula Shultz* (1968) and *Hook Line and Sinker* (1969).

MARTIN, DEAN (1917-1995) Singer and actor. Dino and Bing first crossed paths on the big screen in 1953 when Martin and Jerry Lewis popped up for a gag appearance in *Road to Bali* and Hope and Crosby reciprocated in *Scared Stiff*. This might have been a well thought out Paramount ploy because by 1953 Bing and Bob were being replaced by Dean and Jerry as that studio's top box-office musical comedy team. But by the time the final *Road* picture took Hope and Crosby to Hong Kong the Martin and Lewis partnership had been dissolved five years. By then Martin was making a gag appearance in that film with Frank Sinatra. And it was undoubtedly the latter who was responsible for bringing both crooners together in decent roles for *Robin and the 7 Hoods* (1964). Bing played Allan A. Dale and Dean was John. They were perfectly cast. The sequence in which Dean sings "Any Man Who Loves His Mother" whilst clearing the pool table is a joy to watch. By the time *Robin* was made, Bing was heading for semi-retirement and Dean was working flat out in films, television, cabaret and some uninspired but regularly released albums for Reprise. Dean readily acknowledged his vocal hero was Bing. He even recorded "If I Could Sing Like Bing" for Capitol. Yet he had no need to copy his idol because his laid back romantic ballad style was in a class of its own. As his singing moved towards self parody in the late 1960s so his selection of acting roles became less particular. *Rough Night in Jericho* and *The Ambushers* made in 1967 were OK if unmemorable. *Airport* in 1970 proved that given the right part he could carry a picture but when he accepted a role in *Mr. Ricco* (1975) and bits in the two *Cannonball Run* films in the 1980s it seemed that casting directors had overlooked his strong screen persona.

MARTIN, MARY (1913-1990) Singer and actress. She was a perfect singing and acting partner to Bing in *Rhythm on the River* (1940) and *Birth of the Blues* (1941). It was only pregnancy that prevented her from partnering Crosby for a third consecutive year in *Holiday Inn*. They did appear in the same film in 1942 but this was the all-star *Star Spangled Rhythm* which did not allow the two to spark off each other. If evidence is needed as to how strongly they gelled on screen just watch them sing "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie" from their second film. They were re-united in song on radio during the 1940s but Mary found her lasting fame on the Broadway stage in a series of musicals which have fortunately remained available in the record catalogues over the decades. "South Pacific", "The Sound of Music" and "I Do, I Do" found her creating roles which were eventually passed on to others but which seemed as though they were written just for her at the time of the original stagings. Another of Bing's co-stars, Ethel Merman, couldn't have put it better when she said, "She's OK if you like talent". Mary Martin's 1976 autobiography, "My Heart Belongs", is worth a read.

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A Curiosity Has Come To Denmark

In Denmark, there is a magazine called "Piber & Tobak" which is issued to members of the Nordic Smokers' Guild, a club dedicated to pipes and tobacco. ICC member Ole Meistrup was featured in a recent edition and he arranged for the article to be translated for us. We have great pleasure in reproducing it here with acknowledgements to the magazine in question.

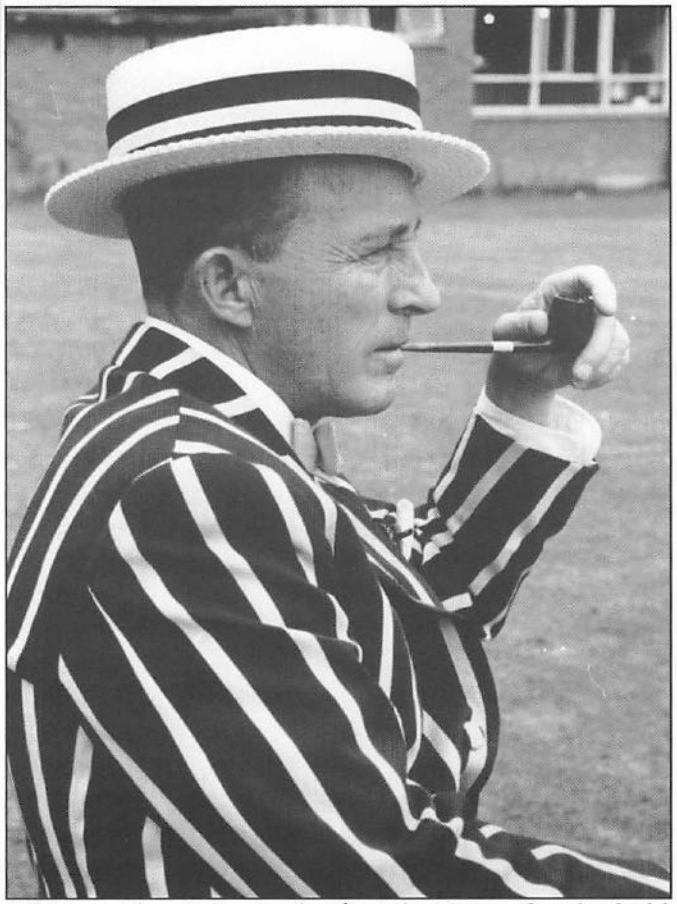
People who are members of one club in Denmark often attend several of the kind. That is also the case of a member of The Nordic Smokers' Guild - Ole Meistrup. Apart from his interest in pipe smoking, he and his wife Gun are also members of the club called ICC. Although ICC has not the slightest to do with pipes and tobacco, an exciting pipe experience emerged from this membership.

ICC is a club that has its domicile in England, but it has members all over the world. The club just celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, and it was at the anniversary meeting in Leeds on the first Sunday in October 2000, that Ole had a really great pipe experience. And at that, an experience he could take home with him in his suitcase.

ICC or The International Crosby Circle is, as the name says, a club whose members are interested in all that has to do with Bing Crosby. They publish a fine professional magazine filled with articles about and photographs of the doings of the now deceased singer and actor. And there is plenty to get down to. Bing Crosby who was born in 1903, came to record more than 1700 songs, and he appeared in 55 films, before his death in 1977. And besides, he was a keen pipe smoker.

Another member of the ICC is Mr. Alan Fisher. Mr. Fisher is a genuine English butler, and as such he worked for Bing Crosby from 1960 to 1977. And later on he worked for Prince Charles and Princess Diana. He also attended the anniversary meeting in October, and for this purpose he had donated a gift that was to be subject to a raffle among the members, together with other memorabilia of Bing. The gift was one of Bing's dear pipes, and who should be so lucky as to win it in the raffle, other than our pipe smoking Ole from Copenhagen. And no one in the whole world could have been happier to come by this treasure. The pipe is now well at home in Denmark, where Ole and Gun take care of it as if it were a King's sceptre, which in a sense it is.

So what kind of pipe is it that Ole has come into possession of? If you recall the photographs you have seen of Bing Crosby, it is exactly the type of pipe that you always saw him with. A comparatively classic Billard with a long, slim stem and a mouthpiece smoothly finished, and with a broad ring of silver that forms the transition between the stem and the mouthpiece. The pipe was manufactured by Merchant Service in London, and the model is called Special, which was definitely Bing's favourite pipe brand and model. Merchant Service is not very well known in Denmark, but it was a major brand in the



USA, not least due to the fact that Bing Crosby held it in reverence. Later on, other manufacturers reproduced the same model, and it was often named "The Crosby". Also it might be worth mentioning that Herbert Merchant, who sold these pipes in London, was a former Alfred Dunhill employee, who had started his own business. Merchant Service pipes were never particularly expensive. Certainly this pipe is not especially sensational or showy. However it is beautifully made even if the grain marking is almost dull, but of course its history makes it special. And certainly it could bring in a sizeable sum of money, if it were to be sold today. But it is absolutely not meant to be!

Together with the pipe Ole got a fine hand-written letter from Alan Fisher which tells of Bing's attitude towards his pipes, and confirms the new ownership. The letter reads as follows:

I gave Ole Meistrup one of Bing Crosby's pipes on October the 1st, 2000 in Leeds, England.

Each of his many, many pipes - of which there are none left! - had a history. Ole's pipe - was one he smoked in the library, probably reading his evening newspaper or watching television.

Each room in the house invariably had a pipe; in his office, the garden room, one in every car, the Rolls, the Jaguar, the Mercedes, The Lincoln Continental - in fact a pipe in every one of his nine cars.

He loved his pipes, and he looked so good smoking one! I gave away so many lovely coloured photographs of him smoking his pipe - sadly I gave them all away over the years.

Yours sincerely
Alan Fisher
(Butler to Bing Crosby and family in California 1960-1980 approximately)

I myself was entrusted with the honourable task of refurbishing the treasure. The operation took place one afternoon at Ole and Gun's place, properly supervised by chairman and deputy chairman of The Nordic Smokers' Guild, Mr. Leif Slot and Mr. Boris Foss Sorensen. And naturally it was with awe that I started to clean, scrape and polish. In the first place the pipe is of a somewhat delicate construction, and it would be very regrettable if anything happened to it. In the second place it had to be done with great care. There is no reason to conceal the fact that the pipe had been used. It is a large part of its charm that you can see that Bing has smoked it frequently. The task turned out to be a not very difficult one. In fact the pipe was amazingly well preserved. No doubt Bing was careful about maintaining his pipes. The polishing of the silver ring, the bowl and the mouthpiece was quickly done. Then the worst coatings on the top of the bowl were removed, and the crust in the chamber was trimmed a little bit, and that was that. In return for a well-performed task we were lavishly entertained with cake and Irish coffee, and we saw selected pipe sequences with Bing Crosby on video.

Now the pipe appears neat and attractive, as you can see in the photographs - just ready for a fill. And that is exactly what Ole has in mind, but only on special occasions. Maybe he will take one fill of tobacco on Christmas Eve, and one on his birthday. If it is to be done the way the pipe is used to, it has to be filled with a blend of Burley and Deer's Tongue. This was Bing's favourite tobacco blend that he bought at Holt's in Philadelphia. Actually the blend can be bought to this day at Cornell and Diehl under the name of "Crooner" - very properly. If you wonder what "Deer's Tongue" is doing in a tobacco blend I can reveal that it is the popular name for a plant which is also called Wild Vanilla. Its botanical name is Liatris Odoratissima. It is commonly used as a flavour for tobacco and grows as a wild plant in North America.

Another curious thing that is said of Bing Crosby is that his ancestors are thought to come from Denmark. Allegedly, they should come, as the name indicates, from a town called Korsby. Just where in this country Korsby is located I don't know, nor if the story is true, but still it is quite an interesting supposition, and it is definitely not unlikely.

Another peculiarity is Bing Crosby's birthday. Either they were not very particular at the time, or

his family has had a reason for making him younger than he actually was, but most of his life he celebrated his birthday as if he were born on May 2nd 1904. As a birth certificate could not be tracked down (it did not appear until late in Bing's life), there was no one who questioned this, but later on it became known that the correct date of his birth was May 3rd 1903. Incidentally his real name was Harry Lillis Crosby, and he came from the town Tacoma in the state of Washington. The nickname Bing he got as early as in his schooldays, and he used it throughout his life.

A lot of anecdotes can be told about Bing, and Ole will probably continue to do so, as he shows his treasure to those interested. The intention is that the pipe shall have its regular place in a purpose-made showcase with concealed lighting that is just being manufactured. Perhaps members of The Nordic Smokers' Guild will be allowed to see it when an opportunity offers itself.

We congratulate Ole and Gun on this very special pipe, and we can all be delighted at the fact that it has ended up in Denmark with some people who really cherish it as the curiosity it certainly is.

An Out-of-kilter Juke Box

One of the stalwarts of our club in the 1950s was Ted Laker. He has now become our resident cartoonist and here he looks back at some connections involving Bing and jazz.

In the old days it would have been comparatively easy to throw a few words together on Bing Crosby, perhaps it was because we were closer to the very much alive personality or figure head, who was the whole reason for the existence of the then, small but growing Crosby club. But today with a whole army of knowledgeable writers and enthusiasts, one has to tread a bit more warily, so it is with more than a touch of trepidation that I set down these thoughts and memories. Did I say memories? Ah, what diverse good times are recalled, almost like that "out-of-kilter juke box," Bing mentions at the beginning of "Call Me Lucky".

It is really surprising just how many aspects of music are opened up by listening to Bing Crosby records, the early sides with Whiteman, and others, including the unforgettable golden sounds of Bix Beiderbecke's cornet, must have helped set my feet firmly on the road to jazz. A wonderful discovery - for what lay ahead? Chicago style, swing, the blues, and eventually real, no frills, honest to goodness, New Orleans music. It was Russell Davies in his survey of twentieth century music, who singled out Bing, saying that it was often overlooked, as to what an interpreter of jazz, in its widest sense, Bing Crosby was.

I have often wondered why the lively "Bing with a Beat", accompanied by Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band hasn't been made more of over the years. A great set, no wonder Bing said on more than one occasion, that he was often at his happiest around Dixieland musicians. Another memory fitting in neatly here, is of reading that plans had been afoot to have Bing singing with the Firehouse Five Plus Two, a bunch of Disney animators, who played music for fun, although whether it was to be a proper session, or excerpts from radio shows wasn't made clear. But a letter to the Crosby office elicited the reply that Decca Records weren't in favour of the idea, which was one of the reasons, the letter went on to say, why Bing finished his contract with them.

Everyone's going dixie these days, and the guys who helped start the craze out Hollywood way are the Firehouse Five (for their recent stint at Mocambo, they added "plus two"). Boys made a few appearances on Bing Crosby's show last season and now the old Groaner is recording some dixie stuff. With them above, the popular Andrews sisters.

Coincidentally, as is the way with these things, a recent browse in a box of LP records outside a second-hand shop, brought to light some tracks from old Crosby radio shows, one of them being "Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me", and yes, you've guessed it, the accompaniment is by the Firehouse Five Plus Two. Short and sweet, but Bing sounds like he's really enjoying himself, pity that there hadn't been more to follow.

Within the last couple of years there appears to have been a proliferation of radio programmes on Louis Armstrong, with more than a nod in the direction of Bing. There was also more about the Crosby talents, both in the Bix Beiderbecke story on radio, with sometimes a fresh slant afforded by the sharp memories of Artie Shaw, and also in a Hoagy Carmichael tribute series which paid deference to the mighty Bing. Apparently the old music master thought highly of the Crosby treatment on "Stardust", and "The Old Lamp Lighter", both records being featured on the series.

I won't go into the whole saga of how I acquired a keen interest in real jazz, taking in the early years when bands left the Crescent City giving rise to the period of classic jazz which was something of a golden recording age for bands such as those led by King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, and Armstrong, to

name but a few. But by devious routes, I became an enthusiast of other musicians who brought about the revival of early, almost primitive jazz sounds, although it was in no sense a revival for them, just a continuation of playing in a way they had always done, back home in New Orleans. Only now some were doing it on a much wider canvas. This started in the 1940s but it was to be some years later before I caught the bug.

Musicians such as Bunk Johnson, George Lewis and others had been sought out, recording sessions lined up, and some of the resulting sounds were a revelation, and were eventually issued over here in the UK. They impressed some of our music makers, the late Ken Colyer, sometimes known as "The Guvnor" amongst them. Why I refer to Colyer is due to being introduced to him at one of the sessions that took place at Studio '51, home of the Ken Colyer Jazz Club, and where I was to become a regular visitor on trips to London. I was privileged in having some conversations with this musician of unwavering principles in his attitude towards the jazz of New Orleans. We used to meet in the bar during the interval and on one or more occasion, talk got around to the early Bing records. One in particular, struck a chord with Colyer and it was "Make Believe" with the vocal chorus backed by the high powered bass of one Steve Brown, who had once been part of the New Orleans Rhythm Kings. In later years the Ken Colyer Jazzmen, not just ones to play the often done to death old jazz war-horses, picked out a few tunes from the Crosby years making neat versions of "Blue Skies" and "Stardust" to name but two.

And now that confused juke box takes me right back in time to around 1917 in fact. The song "I've Got My Captain Working For Me Now" an old Irving Berlin favourite, originally from the Army show of that period "Yip, Yip, Yaphank", was recorded by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, and of course revived successfully many years later for inclusion in "Blue Skies".

Finally as my memories jump about and I run out of metaphorical coins for the mythical juke box, let's return to Louis Armstrong, touring in the late 1950s. An integral part of his show, was the "Now You Has Jazz" routine, with black trombonist Trummy Young, doubling on the Crosby vocal. Satchmo announced him as Bing Crosby in Technicolor!

Ted Laker

Bert Bishop's
BING ON THE BOX

It's a pleasure to be able to report a veritable cornucopia of Crosby on the Box this Christmas past, and in the immediately preceding weeks. Featured films have been, largely, similar in both the U.K. and the U.S.

The much travelled *Roads to Singapore, Morocco, Bali and Hong Kong* (see photo overleaf) have been screened on both sides of the pond as have the inevitable *High Society* and *White Christmas*. The latter on Christmas Day itself in both instances; thereby enhancing the TV viewing in many a member's household. Bing on the Box on Christmas Day lends a special touch to that one day in the year when the work-a-day world, and its many problems, can take a back seat.

Two guest spot films have been limited to the American viewing public: *Scared Stiff* and *Alias Jesse James*. The spoof western, starring the refugee from Eltham, has, to the best of my knowledge, never been screened here in the U.K. since I've owned a VCR - over twenty years now - so I don't have it. But I recall with pleasure seeing it on the big screen and my amusement at the final shoot-out when, unbeknownst to our 'hero', Bing and some famous screen cowboys; such as 'Coop', Ward Bond and Roy Rogers, pick off the baddies one by one. "This boy needs all the help he can get." proclaims our man as he blows away the drift from his smoking revolver. I had begun to despair that we weren't going to see the anticipated gag spot. But United Artists carried on the Paramount and RKO tradition of introducing the last laugh at Bob's expense that cinemagoers had come to expect from a Ski-Nose flick.

An exorcised version of *Here Come The Waves* hit the American TV screens recently. The offending, removed sequence was "Ac-Cent-Chu-Ate The Positive" which has Bing and Sonny Tufts in black face as in the minstrel days of old. This column covered that kind of attitude in the last issue, and my opinion remains unchanged. It's sad that we've come to this sorry state where over the top sensitivity deprives us of such harmless yet enjoyable performances. Let us not overlook the philosophically upbeat message of Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen's tuneful song wherein we are all encouraged to take a positive attitude and eliminate the negative. Following upon events in the U.S.A. last September I would have thought such a musical message would have been very appropriate. Are we

Joan Collins and Bing decide not to be sensible in The Road to Hong Kong

now to be deprived of Jolson movies among others? Can't imagine that such great entertainers as Louis Armstrong, Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson, Eddie 'Rochester' Anderson, The Mills Brothers, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, et al, would have been the least upset.

The Country Girl and *Robin And The 7 Hoods* have had Stateside screenings, whilst *The Bells Of St. Mary's* has been on twice here in the interim period. In neither instance was it the colourised version, which Stan Woodford [see Trading Post] recorded for me about a year ago from the Carlton channel. That channel, and Studio, are terrestrial digital and tend to screen the older classics. Happily, Bing puts in the occasional appearance in much the same way as the American Bravo channel also features vintage films and television programmes.

A case in point was *A Bing Crosby Christmas - Like The Ones We Used To Know,* introduced by the late Gene Kelly, and which is still available over here on commercial release. With clips of Bing's Christmas specials featuring his ever growing family, Fred Astaire, Carol Burnett, Twiggy and the famous hit release of "Little Drummer Boy / Peace On Earth" with David Bowie, this lively festive compilation went out on the Stateside Bravo channel on the 20th of December.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Yet more Yuletide TV came about with the Nancy Sinatra sanctioned release of a long lost 35 mm print featuring her father and a famous guest from ABC's broadly unsuccessful 1957 series [for Bulova watches and Chesterfield] entitled The Frank Sinatra Show. Greg Van Beek kindly supplied a copy of the show on video for review purposes.

Happy Holidays With Bing & Frank was

the Christmas episode, originally screened in black and white, but shown this year in colour, opened with Frank trimming the Christmas tree in his bachelor apartment while singing that tuneful addition to the post 'Fifties Yuletide ditties, "Mistletoe & Holly".

Bing soon breezed in and some snappy dialogue followed, which promised well. Indeed, as they sauntered over to a well stocked bar, after amusingly exchanging gifts of each other's latest Christmas album, images of the opening sequence to "Well, Did You Evah", from *High Society,* raised those expectations still further. Thereafter, though, neither party seemed to be wholly relaxed and, as it was, the twenty-five minute show lacked the real sparkle that the festive season demanded and their joint talent could easily have delivered. It's a job to pinpoint the problem as Nelson Riddle's accompaniment was as crisp as ever and everything was in place for a lively presentation of several seasonal songs of varying vintage. But even a walkabout wassailing session in a Victorian England street setting, with attendant carollers, was hampered by the restriction of studio-bound time and space. Basically, it was all over before it really got going. We hear that whilst Frank sang his songs 'live' Bing pre-recorded his and lip-synched on the show, even on the duets. I must say that there was no evidence of this [and I looked for it carefully]; which is remarkable as his bopped up Rudolph number and the "White Christmas" finale, with Frank, both presented some note bending which, in the case of the Irving Berlin song, Bing never sang exactly the same twice.

Maybe the show remained buried all these years because Frank, as Director, was unhappy about the finished product. But after the event was too late; and now, forty-two years on, there is sufficient distance to allow the world to see and hear the two top vocal performers of the 20th Century in a rare, if rather disappointing, Christmas special which, apart from the street carollers, they had all to themselves. The entire show has been available for a long time on the Ho Ho Ho LP entitled "A Warm And Wonderful Evening With Bing & Frank". But now the two Sinatra sisters, Tina and Nancy, have donated the show to the Museum of Television & Radio who screened it over the Christmas period in Beverly Hills and New York, and on the Trio channel. We learn that it is to be released on both DVD and video, and despite the missing magic, most of us will want this in our Yuletide stockings next Christmas - or sooner!

POP-UP BING

Among my Christmas albums is the Ronco LP, "A Christmas Gift", which opens out in pop-up fashion to display a two foot wide nativity scene. "White World Of Winter" is the one Bing track among an acceptable assembly of talent, though all this is merely a ploy to lead into recording the fact that Bing popped up on *Top Of The Pops* twice in December. The first occasion was a re-run of *Forty Years Of Top Of The Pops* first screened in January last year and given nine column inches of reportage in issue 127 of this magazine. The second occasion was the 19th December when a special Christmas song edition of the programme featured a sequence from *Holiday Inn* with Bing, and Marjorie Reynolds, at the piano performing the first public airing of what is arguably Irving Berlin's most famous composition. With due recognition Bing was one of only three entertainers used in brief clips at the commencement to introduce the programme, following on from Kylie Monogue's sexy rendition of the old Eartha Kitt number, "Santa Baby". After a succession of mainly pop performers Bing came back to fill the penultimate spot with a two and a half minute sequence which also included a montage of scenes from that happy, and most seasonal of all Bing's films. Remarkably, the programme's presenter introduced the clip with the words: 'We couldn't find in the archives anything of Bing Crosby actually in the *Top Of The Pops* studio, so what we've done we've dug out this classic piece of footage that we know you'll want to see.' So where was he, I wonder, when last week's edition was being screened?

BUTTONS AND BEAUS

Billy Wilder's Austrian operetta, *Emperor Waltz,* had a rare screening in the U.K. on the Studio channel in January. Bing's third major film in Technicolor had him cast, rather quixotically, as a super salesman who could yodel a bit, and despite the presence of the genuine sounding Tyrolean warblers he manages to get away with it. The best song from the film, though, must surely be the multi-credited composition from 1929, "I Kiss Your Hand, Madame", in which year Bing's trio accompanied

waxing became the representative recording of that well crafted, romantic composition. But this version is easily eclipsed by the 'bedroom scene' at the Golden Fiddle when he croons the song, ostensibly to Buttons and his intended inamorata, Scheherazade, only to have Countess Johanna falling hook, line and sinker herself. My favourite seduction-by-song scene in all of Bing's movies.

For about the third time Bing's name was the answer on a *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* programme when, on this latest occasion, the contestant was asked, for £16.000, which singer was married to both Dixie Lee and Kathryn Grant. The contestant opted to take the eight grand, which was a good decision, as he thought, of the four options, it was probably Dean Martin as Bing Crosby was a faithful man who wouldn't have divorced to marry again. He was unaware of Dixie's sad demise, obviously.

And writing of quizzes - humble pie corner. Did you spot the 'deliberate mistake' in the last edition of this column? Actually, it was Ethel Merman, not Bing, who sang the word 'Listerine' in the quiz song. That product is one of the comparison examples in the s/t recording of "You're The Top" from the film *Anything Goes*. However, undeterred the poser this time around is in what film did a bone rattling Bing appear? As it's rather unfair to make you wait four months for confirmation of your conclusion the answer is at the foot of this column.

WHEN RADIO WAS KING

. . . . and when Bing was King of Radio. This sobriquet from Radio 4's *Archive Hour* edition "Bing Crosby Meets . . ." was bestowed by Ken Barnes who, with Gary Giddins, presented the best programme I've ever heard on the Crosby years of the pre-tv era. It's a remarkable revelation that, at his peak, Bing's audience was no less than fifty million listeners, representing one in four Americans tuning in to his weekly show for Kraft. Surely, this will remain an all-time, unbeatable record. The sixty minute programme covered just about every aspect of those great days of wireless entertainment from the Cocoanut Grove through to his final years with Rosemary Clooney and Buddy Cole in the mid-1950s.

Excerpts from some sixteen songs were featured, along with guests as diverse as Zasu Pitts, Groucho Marx, Peggy Lee and Judy Garland. Much was made of Bing's support and promotion of black performers with such obvious names as Satchmo, Ella and the Mills Brothers being featured along with the all-black group The Charioteers who, for a long time, were regulars on his show. 'A charming, sociable, amiable guy' said Ken Barnes of Bing, who in 1949 was voted by the American public to be the most admired man in the world concluded Gary Giddins, whose detailed and deeply researched biography of Bing must make him the most knowledgeable man, ever, on the life and times of The Old Groaner. Though one or two of our members may give me an argument on that one!

Not only the voice, but also the wit and humour of Bing's intimacy with the studio microphone, though not always an audience, was encapsulated in this enlightening, entertaining and inspired programme. Much credit is due to everyone concerned in its presentation and production. The producer was Caroline Barbour from BBC Radio in Glasgow and both Ken Barnes and Malcolm Macfarlane played major parts behind the scenes.

UK LOCAL RADIO

So how to cover this busy scene giving appropriate recognition to all those who do so much to promote Bing but at the same time not bore our many overseas readers?

Well, first, the 'King of the Crooners' has been getting some pretty good exposure on Radio Derby courtesy of Mike Carey and his Sunday night *Memorable Memories* mostly organised by Arthur Blood, with Neil Robinson and Maurice Beardmore oft-times in attendance. Mike's tribute to Bing on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of his death was via a musically comprehensive review of his career on which he made mention of the fact that Bing's very last song of all was "Strangers In The Night", which he sang to a group of construction workers on the Moraleja golf course on that fateful day. But leading up to that was a pretty accurate look back over the Crosby years in song - some sixteen of them from "Just One More Chance" from the now famous first national broadcast, picking up rarities such as "Bing's Shell Song" advert, and going through to "There's No Business Like Show Business".

Mention of "The Shell Song" prompts me to relate that I was recently the guest of a speaker at a Probus Club meeting where a friend was giving a talk on the work of the Essex artist, Edward Borden. This artist is famous for illustrative work of many kinds [Radio Times, postage stamps, etc.] including the Shell fuel series which featured punning cartoons featuring place names - 'Little Snoring - but not a murmur from Shell' being an example. As the Shell slides came up I was poised with finger on the button of a cassette recorder to fade in Bing's TV advertisement. 'No expense spared' remarked my friend as he expanded the theme. So, our Bing had an unusual airing to some fifty retired businessmen as they supped their after dinner port!

But back to Mike Carey and this time his Crosby Christmas show with both Arthur and Maurice in attendance to lead him on the path of righteousness. The soundtrack of the trailer to *Holiday Inn* had the programme up and running in

a manner that would have caught listeners' attention straight away. Of Bing's probably seventy-eight Christmas songs around ten well chosen variants from the norm were played and conversationally expanded upon by our two members and their enthusiastic host. Once again: Well done lads!

HUSH, HUSH ...

Whisper who dare; Christopher Robinson is back on the air. Once again with his ongoing South & West celebration of popular music in which the Old Groaner gets a goodly share of the action. I have all this to hand courtesy of Maggie 'Doris Day' Ryan who diligently records just about everything Bing in her neck of the woods.

Next to musicals starring The Divine Doris, *Blue Skies* is her favourite flick and, consequently, pressurised presenters are often heard extolling the virtues of and playing tracks from this great Irving Berlin scored picture; Chris among them. But it was tunesmith Richard Whiting, rather than the erstwhile Israel Baline, who, via Der Bingle, had the most exposure on his programme these past four months. "My Ideal", the Rhythm Boys own take on of "Louise", "Sleepy Time Gal", "Sailor Beware", from *Anything Goes* and the lyrically enhanced "Too Marvellous For Words" were among those composed by the relatively short-lived composer, and here vocally demonstrated to perfection by Mr. C.

'The Voice of Christmas' was how Chris began his December presentation of many seasonal songs by Bing. Christmas Day itself had some of the programme devoted to an excerpt from the film *Holiday Inn;* and an interesting exploration of the lyrics to "Twelve Days Of Christmas". One strongly held theory that it is a catechism for young Catholics in order to learn and remember the tenets of their faith. Each day's jingle representing a coded reference to their beliefs at a time when, in Britain, it was positively unhealthy to be a practising Catholic. For example: 'On the first Day of Christmas my True Love said to Me' refers to God and 'myself' as a Christian; and the Partridge in the Pear Tree is Christ. As partridges don't perch in trees it can be seen as a special sign. The complete lyric was explained, but no room here to go into it all but, needless to say, it was left to Bing and the Andrews Sisters to perpetuate the coded version.

AUTHENTIC AYRTON

Henry, that is, of BBC North who as the in-depth presenter of *The Real Music Show* researches his programmes and interweaves information and music to make his show very interesting to listen to. Bing crops up almost on a weekly basis to illustrate a thread as, for example, a western - landscape theme when both Cole Porter's "Don't Fence Me In" and "The Funny Old Hills" were featured. Henry was intrigued by the thirteen year delayed release of "Lost In Loveliness". A song from *The Girl In Tights* which Bing recorded shortly after the show's 1954 premiere. It appears on the "Rare Style" album which has on the front sleeve that terrific photograph of Bing and Buttons, a still from *The Emperor Waltz,* a near identical copy of which appears on Arthur Blood's latest key fobs.

Anne Hopper has been mainly in air-shot mode for her Bing spots on the *Music Box.* Several sketches were strung together to give her listeners some idea of the Crosby radio shows. Mostly comedy with the likes of Judy Garland, Peggy Lee, Martin & Lewis and Gary Cooper. But the best segment was a light-hearted look at a tuneful medley, with Dick Powell, of some of Dick's movie hits. Anne has great respect for Bing and her compliments reflect this: 'You can always rely on Bing Crosby for a song for every occasion', and 'The man who personifies Christmas', are typical of her pre or post recording comments.

BUT ONCE A YEAR

Maybe only once, but the trappings of Christmas are with us for at least ten weeks; during which time the shops and multiple stores echo to the sound of Yuletide melodies both good and b... awful. Apart from the obvious track, my own experience is that Bing with the Andrews Sisters figure the most frequently. The wireless tends to reflect this, too. There can hardly be a presenter who didn't play at least one track of the six Christmas numbers they recorded together; though Meredith Willson's "It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas" is a firm favourite for mid-December onwards.

Tony Bennett left behind his beloved San Francisco, and brought his heart to the party, along with fellow countryman, Harry Connick Jnr., to each present a Christmas Special for the BBC. Both played Bing's most famous recording with added, flattering remarks about his place in the history of popular music. 'I don't think it will ever be Christmas without Bing Crosby', said Mr. Bennett. 'That is the definitive version. Even in the war the Germans called him Der Bingle. Talk about communicating; this guy really had it.'

And from young Jnr., at the conclusion of the track; 'You don't get any classier than that. A classic crooner who was a great inspiration to me.'

But I thought the best story to come out of Christmas came from Desmond Carrington who after playing "Rudolph" went on to tell of Michael, aged six, and his sister Sarah, aged four, who live in an area still subject to foot and mouth regulations. They wrote to the Department Of The Environment to ask if Santa could bring his [cloven hoofed] reindeer into their locality. Happily, the men from the ministry obliged and issued them with a special,

twenty-four hour permit, made out to Mr. Claus, granting special permission to land, on rooftops only, in their district. A nice touch from the bowler hatted brigade. A sobriquet with which, despite changing times, they'll be forever associated.

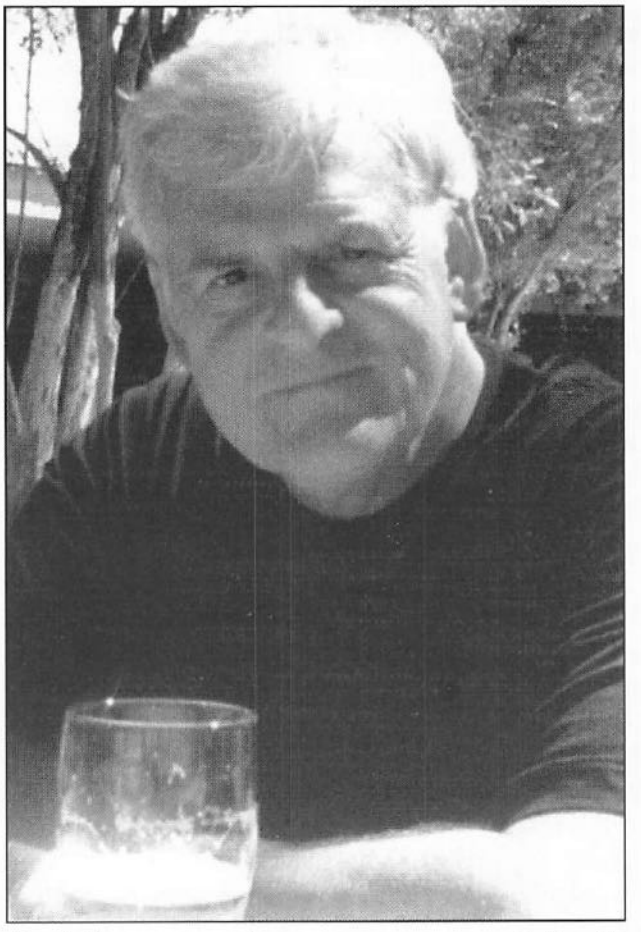
One final word, just to show that Bing is here, there and everywhere. At a seasonal get-together of characters from Britain's longest running radio series, *The Archers,* all three minutes two seconds of the 1947 "White Christmas" were to be clearly heard in the background as the Ambridge folk forgathered in their village hall to celebrate that season of the year when the natural cycle of all things rural is at its lowest ebb.

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

Was Bing a true jazz singer? Well, if you listen to Barnsey at The Beeb there's no doubt about it. Paul (see photo for a view of the man himself) continues to play many examples of Bing's up-tempo tunes which illustrate only too well that even with pretty standard songs Bing very often introduced the influence of his early years among the jazz musicians. On his programme we heard "Bob White", that classic duet with Connee Boswell, the initially blow-up version of "Personality" and "Exactly Like You", about which Barnsey said of Bing: 'One of the greatest jazz singers.'; and an air-shot of "Route 66". 'Real jazz', commented our Norfolk based enthusiast, whose programme has become ever more jazz orientated in recent times. Among several other lively examples I particularly enjoyed the Red Nichols' Basin Street Six accompaniment of Bing with Phil Harris and Dinah Shore performing "The Waiter, The Porter And The Upstairs Maid" on a January 1951 *Screen Guild Players* production. Even "I'm Hummin', I'm Whistlin', I'm Singing" has all sorts of jazz influences there remarked Paul, as he featured his usual first of the month Crosby calendar song.

Another great, oft-times overlooked, jazz recording is "South Rampart Street Parade", the brainchild of Brer Bob along with his drummer, Ray Badouc and bassist Bob Haggart [the duo on the terrific "Big Noise From Winnetka"]. Here performed with great verve by Bing, Maxine, Patty and Laverne with backing from another erstwhile Bob Crosby Orchestra member, Matty Matlock. This exhilarating track was featured by David Lowe on his Bristol based programme along with some radio material and a rare V-Disc version of "That Sly Old Gentleman".

With the death of Peggy Lee, some late entries began to appear on the scene, and I am sure many more will come to hand for future inclusion. But I can quote Russell Davies here who said of



Paul Barnes, to whom we owe so much for his Bing plugging.

Peggy; 'There was always in her voice a fight between optimism and melancholy, but we leave behind the melancholy for this example of true optimism.' The song in question being a performance off the wireless, with Bing, of "It's A Good Day". Russell concluded with an excerpt from *Desert Island Discs* of Peggy talking to Roy Plomley about her nervousness of being on Bing's programmes, and how she always asked him if he would stand somewhere where she could at least see his feet!

WHATTA WAPPAT

Still going strong up there in Tyneside is our 'young friend' Frank who never fails to extol the musical virtues of the master vocalist. 'Let's hear it from the King now. The Daddy of them all' is a typically enthusiastic introduction to his Crosby spot. Bing was known all over the globe, he said, before emphasising the fact that Bing was "essentially a jazz singer - in fact a musician man's singer." To illustrate this musically he gave a spin to "St. Louis Blues" and the Whiteman vintage "Ol' Man River". However, ballads were not overlooked on Frank's likeable show, and one of the best featured was "To See You Is To Love You" from the last of the regular 'Roads'. Hitchcock fans will also know that the s/t version had an airing in *Rear Window.*

Christine Prentice is back on the Bing & Rosie trail again, with several tracks from their numerous rendezvous with the microphone being the mainstay of her very own Crosby corner. However, it is worth noting that if she does lapse into the Bing solo mode her listening public are soon in there clamouring for more of the BC/RC couplings. 'Strauss like you've never heard him before' is very true of "New Vienna Woods", and although Johann the Younger has to be in there somewhere it is Jay Livingston and Ray Evans who we have to thank for the wonderfully inventive lyrics which Bing and Rosie interpret with such joyful enthusiasm.

On that note we sail off into the sunset for another four months, just leaving you with the not-too-difficult quiz answer: *Scared Stiff!*

Bert Bishop
February 2002

(Editor: Thank you Bert. Steven Lewis was another who had some thoughts on that Frank Sinatra Christmas TV show and he put the following comments on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum site on Decemner 12.

> True to its promise, the TRIO channel broadcast the color film version of the Sinatra-Crosby holiday toast from 1957. The show gave off the same warm glow as Bing's final Christmas TV special and I ended up watching it four times last evening. The color was better than the 'Laugh In' reruns that TRIO presented between the two Crosby-Sinatra airings. I can see why the show was limited to a half hour. A couple more "toddies for the body" and Bing would have had to take a holiday cab home.
>
> I noted that Frank directed this broadcast and that it was his directorial debut. The program is certainly quaint by the standards of today's attention-deficit youth. It seemed that Sinatra used 2 cameras and very little editing. But as one who is burned out on the music video style I found the production quite refreshing.
>
> On first viewing I thought I saw Mitch Miller amongst the group of carolers, but later I realized that Sinatra in 1957 would never have allowed Mitch in his production, except perhaps as a chestnut roasting in the fire. Maybe it was Mitch's brother. Anyway, thank God that Nancy Sinatra decided to clean house. I wonder what other gems she will find amongst the dust bunnies.
>
> **Steven Lewis**

ONCE IN A WHILE

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue include:

Peggy Lee, one of the legendary greats of our kind of music and a close contemporary of Bing, died from a heart attack at her Bel Air home on January 21. She was 81. During more than 50 years in show business, which began during a troubled childhood and endured through four broken marriages, her vocal flexibility and cool, breathy voice brought sultry distinction to big band showstoppers, pop ballads and soulful laments alike. Born Norma Egstrom on May 26, 1920, in Jamestown, N.D., her mother died when she was 4 and she was abused by a stepmother. She decided to become a singer at age 14, when she would earn 50 cents a night at gigs for local PTAs.

After singing briefly with Will Osborne, her big break came when Benny Goodman, then the King of Swing, hired her to sing with his band after hearing her while she was performing at a Chicago hotel. Peggy enjoyed several chart successes with the Goodman band including "Somebody Else is Taking My Place" which reached No. 1 in March 1942. The song "Why Don't You Do Right" was another big hit for the Lee / Goodman combination in 1943. She also joined the Goodman ensemble in appearances in the United Artists' films *The Powers Girl* (1942) and *Stage Door Canteen* (1943). Going solo, Peggy found work on radio shows with Jimmy Durante (she was the resident singer on his Rexall Drugs show for the 1947/48 season) and of course with Bing. Her first appearance was on the *Kraft Music Hall* of May 2, 1946 and she later wrote about this in her 1981 autobiography:

> Bing was always so protective and so sensitive during my early days of nerves and self-consciousness. Just before air time on one of my first Kraft programs, he found me standing rigid outside the studio at NBC and asked me what he could do to help. I managed to say, "When you introduce me, would you please not leave me out there on the stage alone? Would you stand where I can see

Peggy with Bing when he appeared on her 1961 UK TV special "A Big Night Out With Peggy Lee".

your feet?" From then on he always casually leant on a speaker or piano to give me the support I needed to learn about being at ease on stage.

You have to love a man like that. He offered everything - money, cars, his own blood, and even volunteered to babysit with our little daughter, Nicki, while David [Barbour - her first husband] was so sick in hospital.

(Miss Peggy Lee - An Autobiography, pages 105-106)

Peggy appeared no less than thirty-one times on Bing's *Philco Radio Time* and during this time she enjoyed many chart hits with "Manana" reaching the top spot in January 1948. Her version of "Riders in the Sky" got to No. 2 in 1949. She also had her own radio show on station KFI for a while and Bing guested on this on March 10, 1949. Peggy continued to work with Bing on his Chesterfield series making 13 appearances. During the run of this show, she made a guest appearance in Bing's film *Mr. Music* (1950). Her record of "Lover" reached No. 3 in the charts in 1952, the year she also appeared opposite Danny Thomas in an updated film version of *The Jazz Singer.* Bing made seven records with Peggy over the years and he also recorded some of the songs she wrote ("It's a Good Day", "Sugar, Don't You Know"). A prolific songwriter, she collaborated with Sonny Burke on the songs for Disney's *The Lady and the Tramp,* and was the voice for the wayward canine who sang "He's a Tramp (But I Love Him)" and also for the dreaded Siamese cats. Her work on that 1955 film led to a landmark legal judgement 36 years later when a California court awarded her $2.3 million after she sued for a portion of the profits from the videocassette sale of the movie. The case hinged on a clause in her pre-video-era contract barring the sale of "transcriptions" of the movie without her approval. Just before her death, Peggy also won a legal case against the Universal Music Group for unpaid royalties.

In 1955, she was cast as a boozy blues singer in *Pete Kelly's Blues,* and she was nominated for a supporting actress Oscar. Her film career was short-lived however. She enjoyed late fifties hits in the USA and UK with "Mr. Wonderful" and "Fever" but it was her live appearances which delighted audiences. She moved into television and was frequently seen on shows such as those hosted by Bobby Darin, Andy Williams, Judy Garland, Pat Boone, Frank Sinatra and Milton Berle as well as Bing. Her biggest hit in the 1960s was the song "Is That All There Is?" which not only reached No. 1 in the USA in 1969 but also won a Grammy.

A diabetic, Lee was often troubled by health problems. In early 1985 she underwent four angioplasties — balloon surgery to open clogged

arteries — and resumed her singing tour. While appearing in New Orleans in October 1985, she underwent double-bypass heart surgery. She was back on stage the following April, telling a Los Angeles audience, "Thank you from the bottom of my new heart." In 1998, she suffered a stroke which impaired her speech, requiring therapy to recover. Peggy obviously thought a lot of Bing as the following extract from her autobiography will confirm.

> Bing was always finding ways to help give me confidence. In fact everyone connected with him was funny and nice and talented. . . .
>
> Bing and I were always the first to arrive for rehearsals. I was always impressed by his promptness, his honesty, and his modesty. I remember him saying, "I wish I could really make something of my life. . . ." It amazed me that he could feel so humble. I tried, in a stumbling sort of way, to tell him what the world thought of him, but I don't think I convinced him. One evening in San Francisco, Bing asked me to go to dinner with him, and knowing how prompt he always was, I started to wash my long blonde hair very early. It was a fairy-tale situation, my idol actually asking me for a date!
>
> Makeup and hair finished early, I eagerly awaited the sound of the doorbell. When it finally rang, I thought, I'll just spray a little of this hair spray to make sure. . . .
>
> It was the wrong can, it was sweet-scented room deodorizer! I turned all colors and Bing laughed and laughed as I tried everything, and finally ended up washing my reeking hair.
>
> He took me to one of San Francisco's great restaurants and during dinner I told him about how I had felt about his movies. Then we cruised all over that wonderful city until we found a pianist who could play "Down by the River" in Bing's key, and he sang to me at our table. The tears rolled again.
>
> *(Miss Peggy Lee - An Autobiography, page 104)*

Peggy was awarded a Grammy as a lifetime achievement award in 1995.

George Harrison, died on November 29, 2001. Although the links with Bing are virtually non-existent, we could not let the death of George pass without some recognition. He was known as the quiet one of the Beatles, the group which conquered the world in the 1960s with 27 number one hits in the United States and Britain. His credits with the group include the songs, "Taxman," "Here Comes the Sun" and "Something," the latter said to have been described by Frank Sinatra as the greatest love song of all time. The youngest member of the world's most famous pop group will always be remembered for his devotion to Oriental mysticism. It was he who persuaded the other Beatles to fly to India and sit at the feet of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. After The Beatles broke up in 1970, Harrison produced a few solo albums, and was the first of the four to top the UK singles charts as a solo artist with "My Sweet Lord." Later he helped form the group The Travelling Wilburys and was also active as a film producer. Bing never worked with George but he did of course sing a number of Beatles songs on record and TV.

Grady Martin, the elite Nashville guitarist who made distinctive contributions to classic recordings such as "El Paso," "Oh, Pretty Woman" and "Battle of New Orleans" and worked with artists ranging from Bing to Buddy Holly to Joan Baez, died at the age of 72 in December last year. Martin and Chet Atkins were said to be the only musicians to accompany both Hank Williams and Elvis Presley. He was a member of the celebrated Nashville collective nicknamed the "A-Team," which included guitarists Atkins and Hank Garland, drummer Buddy Harman and pianist Floyd Cramer. In 1946, he became a guitarist for the Arkansas Cotton Pickers, a western swing outfit, and began to display the versatility that eventually would make him a star among Nashville's community of sidemen. His studio career would span more than three decades, from the sessions for the 1949 Red Foley recording "Chattanoogie Shoe Shine Boy" to his work on Merle Haggard's 1983 track "That's the Way Love Goes." In the early 1950s, he formed the colourfully named Slewfoot Five, a session musician group, and they earned credits on hit recordings by Bing and also Burl Ives ("The Wild Side of Life"). The two tracks he did with Bing on March 23, 1952 ("Till the End of the World" and "Just a Little Lovin'") seem to be either loved or hated by Bing fans. I really like them but the UK publication The Gramophone magazine was somewhat uncomplimentary.

> Though Bing by himself (04970) is still Bing, albeit accompanied by the most horrible alto saxophone this side of the average village-hall band of thirty years ago, Bing's whistle in "Just a Little Lovin'" redeems the side, and the melody of "Till the End of the World" is very attractive. But oh! that accompaniment!
>
> *(The Gramophone, September 1952)*

Grady Martin became a member of Elvis Presley's circle of musicians from 1962 to 1965 and, as music flavours and directions changed, he went on to work with younger artists such as Baez, Kris Kristofferson and J. J. Cale.

Ralph Sutton died at Evergreen, CO on December 30, 2001, at the age of 79. He was an outstanding pianist in the great tradition of Harlem stride giants James P. Johnson and Fats Waller. His career got under way when he joined Jack Teagarden in 1941 while he was still in college. During the 40s he attracted widespread attention, thanks to his participation in a series of radio shows hosted by jazz writer Rudi Blesh, *This is Jazz*. He had a trio with Albert Nicholas, and beginning in 1948 he worked eight years as intermission pianist at Eddie Condon's club in New York. Later he

worked for Bob Scobey and he was the pianist at the sessions in February 1957 when Bing recorded his *Bing with a Beat* album. In 1963, Ralph was featured at the first Dick Gibson Jazz Party in Denver. This was to lead to the formation in 1968 of the World's Greatest Jazzband, of which Sutton was a founding member. Thereafter, Sutton's star rose. He recorded a series of albums and toured the world, solo and in a variety of settings. He recorded for Arbors, RCA Victor, Columbia, Verve, Decca, Commodore, among others and in 1993, he was inducted into the New Jersey Jazz Hall of Fame.

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Peter Burgis, NSW, Australia (e-mail musikman@optusnet.com.au).
Recently I came across a sheet music copy called "Dear Mister Sinatra", by Al Hoffman & Jerry Livingston. It is a sort of "Dear Mr. Gable" parody, published in 1943.

This encounter made me curious as to how many compositions pay tribute to Bing. A brief search has turned up the following :

(1) It Is Crosby - Who Else Could It Be? (Doris Turner on W&G, 1944)

(2) Bing (Dinkie Rew, on Columbia DB-2811, 1950)

(3) If Bing Would Only Sing To Me (George Trevare Orchestra, on Parlophone A-7792, 1952)

(4) If I Could Sing Like Bing (Dean Martin, on Capitol CP-257, 1954)

(5) Mr. Crosby (Edgar Broughton Band, on Harvest HAR-5049, 1972)

(6) Bing (Paul McKay, on Fable FB-312, 1977)

(7) So Long Bing (J. J. Barrie, on EMI EMI-2727, 1977)

No doubt there are more Bing songs, which readers may be able to add to my list.

Another interesting but non-Bing song is "Bing Bing", a novelty piano solo written by Mel Kaufman in 1924 and published in both the UK and USA. Vincent Lopez & His Hotel Pennsylvania Orchestra recorded it in New York on July 18, 1924 for issue on American Okeh and English Parlophone.

Earlier this month a biography on Australian baritone PETER DAWSON by Russell Smith and myself was launched. Information is enclosed in case it may be of interest to some members. There are similarities in the recording careers of Dawson and Bing, each recording about 2,000 studio titles in careers both exceeding fifty years. Peter Dawson was the only singer in the 1930s EMI catalogue to have more titles available than Bing. This situation was reversed by the 1940s.

(Editor: The book Peter Dawson *is published by Currency Press in paperback form. It runs to 360 pages and sells in Australia for $39.95 (Aus). The ISBN number is 0 86819 603 7 and the book is also being distributed in the USA and the UK.)*

Ronald West, Preston, Lancs, UK

I have enclosed a cutting from our paper, showing Bing as I thought it may be of interest to readers of the magazine to see how he arrived at the

A town calls the tune ... a pictorial glimpse at the days when the stars REALLY came out in Preston ...
PLATFORM APEAL: Legendary 'crooner' Bing Crosby arriving at the station for his Preston gig in 1977 (above)
TRUE LOVE: Bing Crosby accepts a floral tribute from a Preston fan in 1977 (right)

Preston concert, three weeks before his death. My wife and I went to see and hear him perform, and as I say to everyone, he was magic, and played to a packed house. I have been a follower of his music for as long as he has been on the scene and I hear him at least once a day with a collection I have. I am in my 86th year now and never tire of listening to him and reading all the news in the magazine.

The enclosed photo shows really how easy going the great man was, just as if he was out shopping.

Stan White, 57 Stanley Street, Rothwell, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 6EA, UK

I still think the image of Bing beside the car on the Dodge advert in the Summer edition of BING magazine is a cardboard (perhaps plywood) cut out of the chap who was often used to stand in for Bing in advertising! (I wonder who he was?).

Yes, nice colourful cover shots of Bing in this Winter 2001 edition of BING, with no less than 62 pages inside the covers. I'll not go through all of the regular features in detail, as all are up to the expected high standards associated with them. It is however a pity that Jim Reilly is lumbered with so many of the same titles time and time again in the CD reviews (and one LP). Of course the hit titles and the million sellers are bound to keep cropping up. I always remember when Les Gaylor compiled that Christmas selection for Pickwick - "Christmas With Bing" PWKS 561, for which I did the notes, Les phoned one day to say that Ken Barnes had told him that it was a good selection with some tracks which had been overlooked on past reissues, but that Les had made a mistake in not including "White Christmas". Ken told Les to never overlook a hit track, especially that one. That of course is a record producer speaking, and not just a collector. Les felt that with "White Christmas" on just about every reissue, he would give it a miss. It is the old thing of what the collectors want, against what the general public might find attractive.

Mozelle Seger's *Stories of a "Pencil Pusher"* made very interesting reading and is the top feature this time, in my opinion.

Can I remind readers that a man named Gary Giddins, has written a book about Bing called *A Pocketful of Dreams* !- just in case you have missed the many pages devoted to the reviews of this book, which is excellent, not that I agree with all that the reviewers say, or indeed, with some of Gary's own opinions on certain matters. To pick up one thing mentioned in Terry Teachout's review, he is wrong to say that John Scott Trotter's backing for Bing is middle-of-the-road compared to the harder swinging, harmonically sophisticated arrangements of Nelson Riddle, because there is a time-shift involved which cancels out the comparison. Trotter was quite capable of giving Bing any type of backing on his radio shows, and often provided real swinging up to date backing - even a bit of Bop, but that was before Riddle, not that Nelson did anything outstanding for Bing when he worked with him.

Trotter had a much better aggregation of musicians, and knew how to use them. Unfortunately John Scott could not often display his best backing for Bing on the commercial recordings for Decca, because basically, Jack Kapp believed in pushing the voice up front and keeping the accompaniment in the background although there were exceptions at times. Also the smaller the backing band, the less the costs of each recording session. Looking back, we may not agree, but at the time Mr. Kapp knew how to get the hits for Bing, and for many others of his recording artistes. He ensured that the business of Decca was run properly, and that side of things was never easy for Mr. Kapp, who had to work hard to build up American Decca, often with support from Edward Lewis of English Decca.

The Properbox 34, 4-CD set *Bing Crosby - It's Easy to Remember,* is an excellent Bing collection, especially with the general public / record buyer, in mind. Anyone purchasing this set will have a comprehensive collection of Bing without ever buying anything else, should they so wish! Covering 1926 to 1950, which means out of copyright recordings, and as far as they could go with a 2001 compilation (i.e. 2002 will extend out of copyright in the UK to 1951). Stan Britt has compiled this and written the interesting 36 page booklet, one of his reference sources being Gary Giddins' A Pocketful of Dreams. This is a good effort - over to Jim Reilly.

I note that Bert Bishop talks about cutting down on the reviews of UK local radio, while the Editor extends this in a footnote to Bert's feature, to include coverage of the regional UK radio. So in other words, Bert will not be allowed to comment upon programmes which feature Bing on individual local radio stations, or the several regional BBC networks, which link together all BBC local stations at night from about 7 p.m., to cover each region of the country.

The latter is a big mistake. It rules out much coverage of Bing with radio presenters who have responded to the help given to them by dedicated Bing enthusiasts, with information, and many albums of Bing's songs, firstly with LPs, and for many years now with CDs, to ensure that they can as far as possible, lay their hands on any Bing track they choose to feature, or has been requested by a listener.

This situation has resulted in much coverage of Bing, which otherwise would not have happened, and the attitude of the ICC in this matter is hurtful to those who have striven to look after the radio people

over many years, and a bit of a kick in the teeth for those many radio presenters who have made an effort to keep Bing on the radio.

(Editor: A sincere and thoughtful letter from Stan which deserves a full response. First of all, I accept the slight dig about the coverage of Gary Giddins book. The book is one of the most favourable happenings on the Bing scene for many years and it was right that we gave it substantial coverage. If I am honest however, I have probably given it more space in the magazine than I wanted to in the last few issues but some of the reviews were very interesting and it was difficult to edit them down in length.

Which brings me nicely to the UK local/regional radio situation. For some time, I have been aware that many of our international readers have only a passing interest in Bing records played on UK local radio. Thanks primarily to Ernest Sutkowski, the late Les Gaylor, Stan White and Maggie Ryan, Bing has received tremendous coverage in the UK and we owe a huge debt to our members who have actively publicised Bing in this way. We also owe grateful thanks to the presenters themselves. However, it was clear to me that Bert's very well written article, on which he expends a considerable amount of effort, was not being read by many people. It seemed that they read the TV bits but then lost interest in the usual three or four pages devoted to UK local radio. As Editor, it was my challenge to edit Bert's article down so that the UK scene received less detailed coverage whilst at the same time recognising the good work which was going on. It was difficult to prune Bert's article without ruining the flow of it, so I asked him to cut back on the UK local radio scene. Note that I have not banned this coverage, I have just asked that there be less of it in the interests of the overall balance of the magazine and bearing in mind the wide diversity of our membership. If members want Bert to return to 4 pages of UK local radio, just write and tell me and I'll ask him to revert. The magazine must be what you want and it's my job to deliver it. The changes of content in Bert's article are due to my reading of your wishes. If I've got it wrong, I'll be happy to eat humble pie! Write and tell me what you think.

Finally, I can only echo Stan's comments about the Properbox 4-CD set. It gives a superb overview of the first 25 years of Bing's recording career. Without trespassing too much on Jim Reilly's province, I should also like to sing the praises of Geoff Milne's Going Hollywood Vol. 3 *2-CD set. A great mixture of commercial and soundtrack songs, with, as I discovered, the odd radio track too. Listening to the CDs in the car, I was surprised by the version of "Sunday, Monday or Always" as I could not place it as being from film or record. Examination of the notes showed that it was from the KMH broadcast of October 7, 1943. Another track which puzzled me was "Old Glory" as Bing did not record it commercially and the film version was "spoilt" by dialogue from the other characters. I called Geoff to congratulate him on the set and I queried how he had done such an incredible job on "Old Glory". It seems that Geoff took most of the song from the film soundtrack and then replaced the offending section containing the dialogue by substituting the finale of one of Bing's versions from the Kraft Music Hall. Clever - and it makes a nice track too. The quality of the whole set is very good indeed and the version of "Kinda Peculiar Brown" is the best I've ever heard. Geoff is working on volume 4 and that will probably be the last one in the series.)*

Barry Whittingham, El Rancho Grande, 25c Garton Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham NG6 8RZ, UK

Do you remember when we went to that 1950's day at the Hilton Hotel in Leeds a few years ago? Well I occasionally buy YOURS magazine and in the October edition they ran a story about that event returning to the Hilton on Sunday, October 28. So I rang up John Cohen who runs the Alma Cogan Society and I suggested that I could turn up with some Bing material and represent the ICC. John said that would be great as the more stands there are the better the day turns out.

As it was the evening before the event that I rang him, I didn't have enough time to run up some posters, so I went through all of the Bing material that I had for sale and I found some of the booklets that we took to the previous event. These, along with about 50 CD's and a couple of boxes of LP's and a few other items, made up enough for me to make use of a decent sized table. I didn't sell much but I wasn't too bothered as it was a great day out and I managed to give out around 20 of the Bing Information File booklets to people who were interested enough to ask about joining the ICC.

I never thought to take along a video of Bing's material but John Cohen had a video tape of Bing singing "Well Did You Evah?" and "The Bells Of St Mary's" which went down very well with the audience. The main event was Jan (who appeared on *Stars In Their Eyes* as Alma Cogan) and she sang several of Alma's songs to a backing tape and almost had a standing ovation.

(Editor: Well done, Barry for promoting Bing and the ICC in that way. It all makes a difference.)

****

The Road to Hillsborough

Charlie Baillie sent us this most interesting article from 1974.

An interview with Bing Crosby
by Tracy Johnston

The road that Bing Crosby traveled to his Normandy-style mansion in Hillsborough was a straight one. Right to the top. From the beginning as a jazz singer and drummer in 1925, he had what Hollywood calls "mass appeal." In his case, it was a beautiful, untrained voice and a nonchalance that was the precursor of "cool." He broke no new ground, took no disappointing dead-end paths, never had to accomplish a "first" or even anything controversial. He sailed along the road to fame and great riches by suggesting that life - even during the Depression and war - is nothing to get particularly uptight about.

"Why get yourself into a slough of despond?" Crosby asks in 1974, sitting in his library on an antique white couch with enormous fluffy down pillows. Crosby is an extremely pleasant-looking man. He almost seems out of place in his formidable house. His walk is springy, like a dancer's, and his clothes are of the baggy golf style. He is relaxed, but waits politely to be asked questions. This interview, for him, is business.

At one point, however, he does hum a tune from a new album he's doing of songs that illustrate his philosophy:

"I'm a millionaire, even though-da-da-dum - I've only got a pocketful of dreams . . ." Some of the voice is still there, and it sounds good.

The reporter has read enough about Crosby to know that at age 70, he has a talented, pretty young wife, three pleasant, obedient children and a lot of free time to play golf and tennis, hunt birds, fish, travel and "fool around" with Bob Hope and old "singer personality" friends on television. The reporter can't think of any reason why he should sink into a slough (he pronounces the word correctly) of despond. "Have you ever wondered," she asks anyway, "if maybe there's something superficial about your philosophy - that maybe everything won't always work out?"

"If you can help something you don't let it just slide," he says, "but if you can't help it, why worry? "So you don't ever say to yourself," She presses, "Well this time I'm going to tell it like it really is; forget this optimism bit."

"Na-a-a-a-ah," Crosby replies.

"For instance, you wouldn't want to sing blues?"

"Oh, the blues are basically kidding."

"You mean Billie Holiday was kidding all that time?"

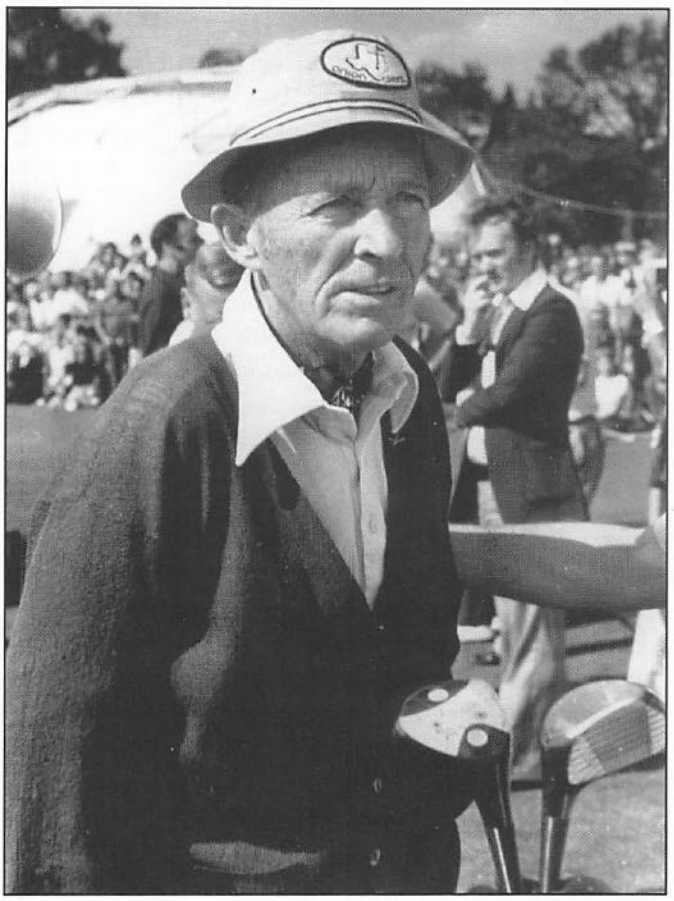
"Well, if I sang the blues," Crosby replies, "I'd have to be kidding."

He means it. He is, after all, a devout Catholic. Whatever murky levels there are to his psyche are wrapped up in the forgiving and very private rituals of the church.

"I have sins," he says. "But you'll never know them. Only father confessor."

It begins to dawn on the reporter that Crosby's low-key, unpretentious public image has served him well. It has certainly allowed him to give hundreds of interviews over the years without ever upsetting his fans, and has kept the insecurity that makes good copy neatly under wraps.

Most bona fide living legends, like Crosby, find it difficult to keep their public and private lives respectfully separate. Sinatra still stands alone in Madison Square Garden, facing off the TV cameras as if they are opponents, making it perfectly clear that he - unlike Nixon or Ford or almost any other living human being - can say any goddamned thing he wants and still be loved. And Hope still jets from one guest appearance to another as if time and the public might be running out, calling strangers to his hotel room in the middle of the night because he can't stand to be alone. Only Crosby has kept his public image so low-key that it has never been tarnished with the hint of desperation.



The reporter asks if he thinks his public image is more or less what he really is.

"Oh, I guess so," Crosby says. "They think I'm pretty much of a lazy noodnik, and I am."

"Why do you think 'I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas' sold more copies (around 20 million) than any other record in the history of the world?"

"Oh, I don't know. It's a pretty song, nice sentiment. It happened to catch on.'

Ah-h-h, the Crosby nonchalance.

No longer a man seeking new ideas

Crosby is no longer a man seeking new ideas, if he ever was. He isn't interested in the question of new comedy versus old, New Hollywood versus Old, or even politics (though he's not a right-winger as many assume). He doesn't want anything more out of life now, he says, except to see his children grow up to be useful citizens. At the time of the interview, he is mainly looking forward to trading jokes with some old friends on the way out to the duck club where he will eat well, tell stories with the boys, and get up at five the next morning to wait in the still, peaceful "romantic" marshes for the calls of wild ducks and geese circling overhead.

Crosby says he spends maybe eighty or ninety days a year working - doing TV specials, fishing and hunting shows, guest spots and the golf tournament. The orange juice commercial he and his family made for Minute Maid was not done for the money, he says, but as a favor to an old friend. Crosby bought a lot of the company's stock when it was just starting, and sold when it was high. The money from the commercial, he seems to indicate with a shrug, is a drop in the bucket compared to what he's made off his initial investment. The rest of the year he hunts quail in Georgia, duck and geese around Marysville or the Sacramento Delta, and more exotic birds in Africa. (For a few years, he and four friends leased an island off Richmond, stocked it, with quail and pheasant and hunted there.) He goes deep-sea fishing in the spring at his place in Las Cruces, Baja, and in the winter he spends some weekends at his ranch near Mt. Shasta, for more hunting and trout fishing. In between, he plays golf all over the world. (He can still break 80, and is one of two golfers to ever get a hole-in-one at the treacherous 16th hole at Cypress Point.)

Although he talks about his lifestyle as if it consisted of simple pleasures, Crosby's Hillsborough mansion is not what one would exactly call comfy. In fact, most of the rooms seem like they should be roped off in a museum. The living room was once part of an abbey in England, and the staircase and guest room were imported directly from San Simeon before Hearst gave the property to the state. The butler previously served the Queen Mother, the Prince of Wales, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

The house is clearly a showplace, which doesn't seem to fit with the active, purposeful life of the Crosbys, their love of show business, and their emphasis on family life. There is little memorabilia in sight; the only "star" photo is one signed by the Kennedys. Crosby gives Jack Kennedy the ultimate compliment: "He was a great personality, whatever you think of his politics; a good storyteller, really. Just a wonderful person to be around."

Crosby's best memories seem to be of eccentric personalities, characters, people who were good storytellers and adventurers. He wants to write a book about some of them one day, although he say he's too lazy to get around to it. He points out the French tapestries and the Queen Anne chairs as he gives a brief tour of the house, but what he really loves, one senses, is the kind of very simple fun that most of America remembers from the "Road Shows" he did with Hope and Dorothy Larnour years ago.

In those shows, boys were boys (that means they chased girls and tried all kinds of zany, crazy stunts), girls were loved and looked after (if they were well-mannered and pretty), you and I were just as good as any upper-class phonies (provided we were entertaining characters), and God in his heaven looked over all and forgave. In his best moments, Crosby came across as funny because of his nonchalance, his almost ingrained equanimity in the face of calamity, his readiness to burst into song and laughter without any particular cause.

The reporter asks if he feels that the "Road Shows" are the best thing he's done.

"I don't know if there was any quality to them other than they were a lot of laughs, a lot of entertainment," he replies. "But it was great fun doing them."

And that is just about the way he assesses his entire career now that he looks back on it. The road to the top, he says, never gave him any hard bumps, and it was mostly fun. (The top, in Crosby's case, is the very top. The Guinness Book of Records lists his record sales at 300,000,000 copies.)

"We had a musical family you know," he says. "My sisters played the piano, my father played the guitar, my mother sang in the local theatricals and we always had music in the house. I guess we sang since we were very small, and it was kind of natural for me to be in a band."

"But what about your famous delivery?" the reporter asks. "You must have had to develop that with a lot of practice."

"No, mostly imitation I guess. Jolson was a great idol of mine. All the great musical shows that used to go on the road would touch Spokane, Seattle, Portland when they were out West, and I learned by imitating the ones I liked."

"Then how did such a lazy noodnik get to Hollywood?"

"I was studying law at Gonzaga, a small Jesuit college, and also playing drums and singing in a jazz orchestra. We made a lot of money for those days and I thought it would probably be more lucrative than the study of law. And I wasn't very good at the study of law either."

So one day in 1925 Crosby woke up in Southern California to find that the good times he had imagined in fantasy land could all come true. He moved from one club to another, always somehow heading upwards despite repeated instances of drinking and carousing too much to make his shows on time.

"I did five or six shows a day in those days and didn't make much money at first," he says. "But it was so much fun that it never seemed like work to me. To be in that environment and around people I'd read about and heard about and whose records I'd listened to - I had no goals, I just wanted to be a part of it. I found myself in the company of jazz greats - Armstrong, the Dorsey Brothers, Beiderbecke, people like that. Those were my idols, you know - Glenn Miller . . ."

"Did they become your close friends?"

"All of them."

His marriages

His first marriage to Dixie Lee was more difficult to handle than his career. She was known as a drinker, as was he, and he was away from home a lot. Their four sons were sent to Catholic boarding schools and didn't have an easy time trying to make it on their own. Gary Crosby, now a television actor, had some bouts with alcoholism, and the other three sons have been married and divorced a lot and still hover not too successfully on the edges of show business.

"Gary works all the time on TV," Crosby says. "He's in a couple of series now and had a series of his own ("Adam 12") for a while. He does a lot with youth activities in his area - little league baseball, basketball and football. Dennis is in the quadraphonic sound system business [previous reports had him importing fish from Mexico and selling vitamin pills] and another boy, Lindsay, rents horses to Western pictures and acts in them. Phillip does nightclub work, he just got back from Australia."

Crosby says he thinks they are all doing just fine. During the interview he does not say a bad word about anyone.

In 1957, a year or so after Dixie Lee died, Crosby married Kathryn - a Texas beauty queen who had come to Hollywood to be in the movies. He was 52, she was 22, and they started a family right away. This time he was determined to do it right.

"Oh yeah, our age difference caused a scandal," says Crosby. "Her mother said she was marrying me for publicity, but that all worked out fine."

He met her when she interviewed him for a local Texas newspaper. "What was it," the reporter asks, "that made the interview so memorable?"

"She impressed me for a girl of her age," Crosby replies. "She was bright and articulate, literate for a Texas girl, and she had a lot of drive. Still does."

Since marrying Crosby, Kathryn has done summer theater stock, gotten a nursing degree, acted with ACT for two years, given many elegant parties for the Burlingame social set, and now has a talk show at 9:00 a.m. on KPIX. On television she is poised and controlled, never allowing a particularly aggressive intellect to show itself behind her Southern charm.

The Crosbys moved to Hillsborough from Hollywood twelve years ago.

"I'd been coming up here for years," Crosby explains. "I played all the old theaters: The Golden Gate, The Warfield, The Paramount over in Oakland, and the T&D. I had many friends here and started to play golf - there's just so much good golf around here, around all of Northern California'"

Crosby says that at this point in his life raising his kids is really what he cares about most.

"You want to be successful at raising your kids more than pretty near anything - you know, having your children turn into somebody you can be proud of. Looking back, I can see I didn't do enough with the four boys. I just didn't have the time to be with them. I thought I was a good father at the time, but now I'm with these kids all the time and I think it's a good thing. They're not at boarding schools, we all have dinner together, things like that."

Crosby is obviously proud of Harry, 17, Mary-Frances, 15, and Nathaniel, 13.

"Harry," he says, "is a serious musical student. He's studying harmony and composition. Plays the guitar and piano and wants to go to Juilliard. He's a good golfer and is training three hunting dogs. He plays tennis - he's very, very busy. He's not too interested in singing although once a week a fellow comes out here and they sing for a couple of hours - he's trying to learn how to project. Now you have to hug him to hear him. I just tell him to go ahead and holler and he'll finally find a range or register that's suitable."

Hasn't Crosby ever taken voice lessons, ever?

"Once my mother took me to a voice teacher when I was about ten and he started giving me the 'ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah' and I never went back. The neighborhood kids teased me about it - thought I was a real sissy to take voice training."

"So your children aren't doing it the easy way like you?"

"No. For instance Mary-Frances wants training. She's been in the ballet nine or ten years and wants to be an actress. She's studying voice now. She's done a couple of things on television and at school. She has a peculiar quality that you find very seldom in people. She can be quite an ordinary-looking girl - around, talking, visiting, whatever - and as soon as she gets up on the stage and starts to read a line or sing a song or do a dance, something happens. She just electrifies - sparks come. You see that very rarely and for that reason I think she has a future.

"Now the younger one, 13, is strictly into sports: golf, tennis, football, statistics. The Minnesota Vikings is his team. He goes to their training camp when they're out here. He went to the game where they played the 49ers and sat on the bench and during one of the pass plays the defensive end for the Vikings ran right over him. He loved it. He takes golf and tennis lessons and he's a serious student. He really practices what he's been taught and works at it. I think he's going to be a good athlete."

The privileged life, the conspicuous wealth, are reminiscent of another Peninsula family - the Hearsts - and of course, Patty. Patty's father just after she was kidnapped said, "We've had her for twenty years, they've only had her for six weeks."

The photographer asks Crosby how people on the Peninsula were affected by the SLA. He's been told that the FBI doesn't want exits and entrances to Crosby's house photographed.

"Well, of course, we know the Hearsts very well and feel just terrible about the whole thing. But we have a very good Police department here and now we have this electronic gate . . ." His voice trails off. The thought of the SLA is obviously a nightmare. For the very rich, the usual fear of kidnapping has taken on new dimensions.

Politics?

As the reporter wanders outside with Crosby and surveys the huge Eucalyptus trees and the expansive, very green lawn, she remembers that the one thing people say they want to know about Crosby is whether or not he voted for Nixon. The public, for some reason, is intensely curious about how Hollywood stars vote.

"I've never been too interested in politics," Crosby says. "I just don't think it's quite legitimate for an entertainer to use whatever influence he might have to get people to vote one way or the other. Sure, I was disillusioned by Watergate. I never thought that sort of thing went on at that level. You know, if you try and think how long it's been since we've had a statesman - we've had a lot of politicians, but we haven't had a statesman since - the only name that comes to mind is Robert Taft. "Perhaps Adlai Stevenson."

"Yes, Stevenson, too. I actually thought Stevenson would have made a good President. I guess the unattractive part of politics for me is all the deals, the patronage; you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. Like ambassadors. I've traveled all over the world and met some American ambassadors that can't even speak the language of the country they're in. In Britain they train their ambassadors. Here they get pushed out of a political machine.

"I was talking over long distance to Washington D.C. with a senator awhile back - called me for some deal - and I said, 'How do you think Max Rafferty will do back there if he gets elected?' And he said 'Don't worry, we'll tell him what to do.' That's the attitude."

"Are you a Democrat?"

"No, I don't think I'm anything. I'd probably be a Republican, I guess. It seems lately I've voted for Republicans more than anyone else so I must be a Republican. Do they have a different political philosophy? I don't know."

So that's the way Bing Crosby feels about politics. Did he vote for Nixon? Sort it out for yourself. He voted for Kennedy, he gave a talk supporting his old friend Shirley Temple Black; he was against the Vietnam War from the start. He thinks he's a Republican.

Crosby's wealth is also a constant source of speculation for his fans. Magazines have continually listed him as one of the ten richest actors in Hollywood. Royalties alone would do it they say, but in addition he has oil and banking interests, owns part of the Pittsburgh Pirates, some race horses and a TV production company. Crosby says Hope has got to be the richest man in Hollywood. "But anyone with a long career who took care of himself," he says, "has a lot of money now." He got a lawyer forty years ago and has more or less left his business affairs to him.

Crosby also gives his share of money to charity. (The golf tournament nets around $400,000.) He's interested in preserving the Atlantic salmon, saving wild ducks and keeping streams unpolluted for fishing. A couple of years ago, he says, he and some friends won a campaign against the fishermen of Denmark who were indiscriminately netting thousands of tons of Atlantic Salmon each year before they could return to American rivers to spawn. Since the fish meant two or three million dollars a year to Denmark, the country was reluctant to give them up.

"Finally," says Crosby, "we threatened to boycott Danish products - cheese, beer, silver, all of the stuff they sell in America - and they came back with a threat to boycott my movies. But I don't think one had been shown there since 1930, so that was an empty threat."

Eventually Crosby got the American

government involved and a treaty was worked out with Denmark which will phase out the fishing in two years.

Besides sporting causes, Crosby's other charitable interest is "Youth Fund," which gets its money from the Crosby Golf Tournament. The money goes to small colleges across the country in the form of loans to students who want to continue their education. It also builds and maintains recreation centers for youth and supports several charities around the Monterey Peninsula.

Towards the end of the interview, it is clear to the reporter that Bing Crosby is a subject unlike any other she's known. Many subjects enjoy talking to her because they like to come up with intelligent ideas about who they are and what they're doing. Others want to talk but are so busy making it that they have to hurry and take care of business. Crosby, however, is a man who simply has more interesting things to do than sit around and talk. He would rather be with the boys - telling stories, playing practical jokes, singing, making quips. He's like Mickey Rooney in all those early movies saying, "Hey, gang, I have a great idea! Why don't we get a bunch of the kids together, get some musical instruments, some costumes, and put on a show?"

"Oh I love that kind of thing," he says, "there's nothing worse than a big cocktail party where you stand around and just talk. We once had a group called the Westwood Hills Marching and Chowder Society. About twice a month one of the members would put on a big entertainment, and everybody would work up a skit, privately - a bit of some kind. And they'd put up a tent in the backyard and do a show. We had a great time. Some of those people were really funny - great to ad-lib with, good sense of timing and so forth.

"Or if we went to someone's house for a dinner party, after dinner everybody would do something: sing, tell stories. Some of it was a little staggy - nothing too rancid - but things you couldn't do publicly."

When the photographer starts focusing his camera in the morning sunlight, Crosby excuses himself, goes inside the house and emerges with a hat and tennis ball. Although he freely admits to being 70, calls himself an ex-singer, and seems to have become a full-time sportsman, the necessity of having a head of hair for his public remains. The tennis ball is also an old pro's prop; by, throwing it up in the air and bouncing it off a couple of walls he can produce the familiar Crosby cool, even without the pipe or a song. Inside, while just sitting and talking, he had twitched his leg so nervously that once it thumped the coffee table for several seconds before he noticed. Outside, with the tennis ball, however, the body moves loosely but in control; the eyebrows go up, the eyelids are heavy, one corner of the mouth twists slightly into a nonchalant smile. The photographer and he work quickly together - Crosby holding poses that he knows are right. His voice betrays irritation because the reporter is keeping him so long, but the look of good humor, the sense of having a very pleasant time, never leaves his face as the camera shutter, set on automatic, snaps away. The reporter remembers Crosby is an actor - some have said even a better actor than singer. He won an Academy Award, after all, for his portrayal of a Catholic priest in *Going My Way*.

He looks at his watch and finally says, "I've got to go."

The butler brings around the car and the reporter asks him if he likes working for Crosby. Crosby says, "Just don't tell them about the marijuana patch out in the backyard."

The butler says, "Oh, and Harry's selling it in school. We won't tell them about that either."

Crosby gets in the Rolls-Royce and drives off. The exchange, between the man whose crooning has sold more than three hundred million records, and the butler, who has served the Prince of Wales, is just a joke.

The butler says, "Really, it's so boring, don't you think, to hear the other side of the story from the servants. I mean, isn't a man like Bing Crosby enough?"

Tracy Johnston

The John Joyce Auction

John Joyce was a vital member of our management team and was instrumental in having the magazine printed in its current glossy form. Sadly John passed away on

December 18, 1994 and following the death of his wife Rita, his son, also named John, decided that, with regret, his father's Crosby collection would have to be sold.

We enclosed brief details of the auction in the last edition of BING and also the auctioneer obtained nationwide press coverage which we now reproduce:

> The 'biggest collection' of Bing Crosby memorabilia in the UK will be auctioned in Newcastle on St Valentine's Day. Thousands of items including Crosby records, clothing, posters and photographs will be up for grabs at Miller's auction.
>
> Seller John Joyce is keeping letters, an autographed book and a bronze bust of the famous crooner. He persuaded his mother to keep the collection after his father and life-long Crosby fan, John, died eight years ago, reports the Newcastle Evening Chronicle. He said: "After dad died, my mother wanted to get rid of it straight away because of the memories. I persuaded her to keep it because I didn't know if, when I was older, I might be interested in it. But I have come to the conclusion I am never going to get any pleasure from it. I don't know how much it will fetch but I am not doing it to make money. I would like it to go to someone who will get pleasure from it and will really appreciate it."
>
> John's father began collecting records and over the years his hobby grew into an obsession. Altogether 212 lots will be sold at Miller's auction in Byker, Newcastle, on February 14. Auctioneer Jeremy Pattison believes it is the biggest sale of its kind ever to be held in this country. He said: "It's an incredible collection and is bound to be of great interest to Bing fans."

The coverage was also seen on the Internet and picked up by Steven Lewis in his Bing Crosby Internet Museum. The local TV stations covered the event as did the newspapers. I duly travelled up to Newcastle (160 miles away) on the day before the auction to view the items and had useful discussions with John Joyce Jr., the auctioneer and the people from BBC television. Background shots were taped showing us inspecting some of the lots. Several members had asked me to examine certain items on their behalf and bid for them. My own interest was in some of the books on sale.

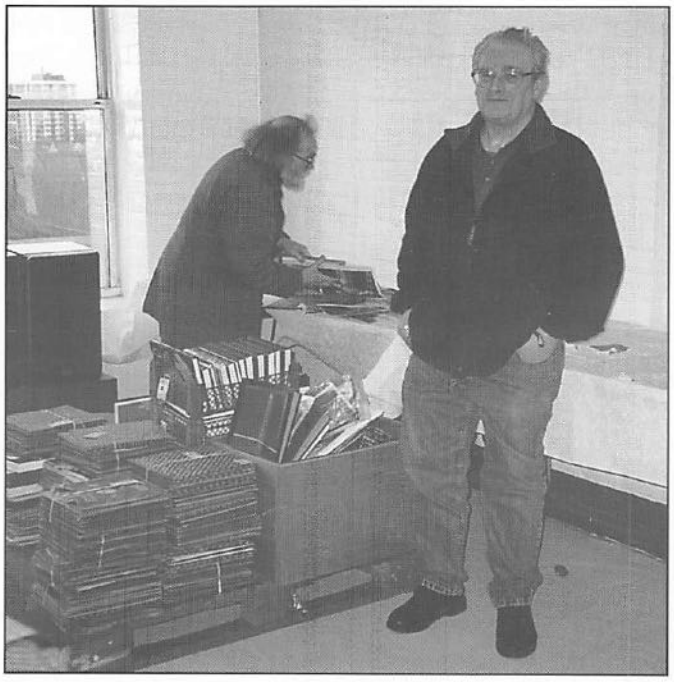
The auction itself commenced at 11 a.m. the next day and I met several ICC members there, namely, Oisin Andrew and his father, Tom Matthews, Tom White and Syd Wilson. It took just over 2 hours to dispose of all 216 lots and the auctioneer moved at a brisk pace. The LPs had been batched up into lots of 20 with Bing's Hollywood and the Australian Crosbyanas mixed in with more mundane items. Many dealers were present and they picked up some bargains despite several of us bidding the prices up. In all 539 single LPs were sold spread over a total of 27 lots and they fetched a total of £308 (say US $437) or a derisory 57p (81 cents) each. John Joyce's own Limited Edition Club series of LPs sold badly and made prices of between 30p and 45p each! Many of us bought them for £5 each when they came out in the 1980s. Lots comprising seven boxed sets of LPs (e.g. The Longines set) were not as popular as I had thought and sold for £10 / £11 (say $14 / $15).

Another lot of LPs goes under the hammer.

I had been very doubtful about the auctioneer's ability to sell the many lots of Crosby 78s on offer. They had been batched up in bundles for each year and it was encouraging when the first lot comprising twenty 78s from 1927 - 1928 sold for £20 ($28). Probably some Bix collectors were in attendance. However prices gradually fell and several times the auctioneer amalgamated a lot with the next one in an effort to boost the price. In all there were 41 lots of 78s with a total of 838 records. In total they made £310 or 37p. (52 cents) each.

The books in which I was interested attracted the attention of a bookseller called Bob Cook and we were bidding against each other. Each time I reached my pre-calculated ceiling I stopped and he duly picked up the items. Some of the lots comprised twenty books which were a mixture of "The Crosby Collection" series, "The Road To Hollywood" and the Ken Barnes book "The Crosby Years" and these made around £22. In all, Bob must have bought about 25% of all the lots on offer at the auction. I managed to buy the books I was seeking "The Road to Bing Crosby" and "Crosby on Record" from him afterwards and his details are quoted in Trading Post as he may well be able to fulfil other members' needs.

One man there was particularly interested in a lot of twenty-three Ampex Concert Tape reels (non Bing) and he eventually paid £110 ($156) for them. Seven lots comprising a total of 69 CDs sold for £79 ($112). Other notable items sold were a boxed ATG acoustic microphone which made £65 ($92), a Panasonic WJ-MX12 digital production mixer (£140 or $198), a Revox C270 tape recorder (£290, say



Bob Cook with his "booty"

$411), a Revox B261 Synthesiser, FM tuner, B251 Integrated & Court Acoustics Graphic Equaliser (£500, say $710), thirteen framed lobby cards (£100, say $142), Fifty pieces of Bing sheet music (£45 or $64), an album containing 23 unframed lobby cards (£190, say $270), a Bing Crosby National Pro-Am golfing cap (labelled Bing Crosby inside) (£130, say $184), a framed 78 of "I've Got the Girl" (£35, say $50), a Porcelain golfing decanter "39th. Bing's National Pro-Am" (£280, say $400) and finally a Cavanagh Green Hat (attributed to Bing and bought at the Butterfields auction) (£80, say $113).

The auction was very well marketed and so it can be helpful to us to get some idea of the value of our collections. Many of you will be disappointed but the prices seen do tie in with the figures obtained at Leeds when selling the collections of deceased members. Whether the same figures would hold true outside the UK I do not know. US and Canadian members might have greater success for specific items using some of the online auction houses such as Ebay. I am beginning to think that the best way to deal with a substantial collection is to try and sell the rare and valuable items separately and then dispose of the rest to a new Crosby collector or even a dealer.

By the way, I still have a small number of the actual catalogues for the auction if anyone would like a copy. No charge.

I had a brief chat with a reporter from the local newspaper and I was surprised to find her short article on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum a few days later. The article follows with acknowledgements to "The Journal."

Malcolm Macfarlane

Eyes down for jackpot as Bing goes for auction

from *The Journal*

He was the Robbie Williams of his day and known for singing one of the best-selling songs of all time with his hit 'White Christmas'. And despite the fact he died 25 years ago it seems Bing Crosby is as popular as ever.

Yesterday one man's obsession with the crooner went under the auctioneer's hammer as dozens of fans flocked from around the country to attend the sale in Newcastle. More than 3,000 items, including Bing Crosby's own hat and tie, were up for sale thanks to a unique collection put together by the late John Joyce.

The items, mainly records and photographs, were amassed over the years by Mr Joyce, a bookbinder from Gateshead who died eight years ago. His son, also called John Joyce, was left with the memorabilia but decided to put it up for auction so other fans of the legendary singer could treasure the goods.

"Ever since I can remember there were Bing Crosby records about the house. My dad just loved him," he said. "As dad got older he became more and more interested in Bing and started collecting everything he could. Personally, I'm not a fan. Because of my dad's obsession, I've had enough of Bing Crosby to last me a lifetime! When dad died the collection was stored in my house. I wasn't going to do anything with the items so I thought I would sell them to people who would appreciate them."

Crosby fans from all over the country attended the auction, which featured 216 lots. Malcolm Macfarlane, editor of BING magazine, travelled from Cheshire for the event.

"I came here to buy on the behalf of other fans. I paid £17 for an old portrait of Bing. It's for a friend so I know he will be delighted," he said. "It's been a good auction and it's evident that there are quite a lot of Bing Crosby fans here in the North-East."

Some of the memorabilia, including Crosby's hat which was sold for £80, were initially sold in an auction organised by his wife Katherine (sic) Crosby after the singer's death in 1977. Mr Joyce senior had a representative attend the auction in San Francisco.

Although Mr Joyce junior doesn't share the same interest as his late father, there are a couple of items he decided not to part with. "My dad bought a book on Bing Crosby one day and decided to send it to the man himself asking him to sign it," he said. "He didn't expect to get a reply but the book returned one day. It had been signed and enclosed was a lovely letter from Bing wishing the family a Happy Christmas. I would never sell those as they are so personal."

I Still Suits Me

Over the years, Bing offered kind remarks about many of the female singers who worked with him - performers like Connee Boswell, Peggy Lee, Ella Fitzgerald and Rosemary Clooney.

But the singer he once called "the greatest stylist of them all" worked with him only one time, and that in passing. She was Lee Wiley (pictured below).

Miss Wiley (1908-1975) came from Oklahoma to do radio work in 1931 with Leo Reisman's Orchestra and then with Paul Whiteman (after Bing had left the Whiteman fold.) She supposedly refused a new contract with Whiteman because her then boyfriend, the conductor Victor Young, was denied credit on the air for his vocal arrangements. Miss Wiley eventually became popular in New York as a radio and cabaret singer. She developed a cult of admirers - including, evidently, Bing. She often worked with jazz musicians but denied being a jazz singer.

She had setbacks. She was sidelined by tuberculosis. She was plagued by heavy drinking. At times, she dropped out entirely - then came back to sing again. She managed to go into musical history books as the first popular singer to record albums limited to specific composers or lyricists. Soon after, Bing did some of that - Porter, Gershwin, Kern, Stephen Foster, etc.

When Lee Wiley recorded eight Harold Arlen compositions in 1940, the only words outside or inside the 78 r.p.m. album jacket, other than the title, were the raves from Bing: "A great album. Arlen music played by the Masters, and sung by the greatest stylist of them all. Miss Lee Wiley."

The "Masters" turned out to be a collection of New York jazz musicians fronted by Eddie Condon. Bing himself ultimately cut three numbers with Condon and his forces in January, 1946. But he didn't get to work with "the greatest stylist of them all" until March 17, 1947, and then it was an odd one-shot arrangement.

Early in 1947, Jack Kapp of (American) Decca was patching together for October release an album of Jerome Kern - Oscar Hammerstein II songs from their 1927 musical, "Show Boat." He had on hand recordings by four Decca artists, including Bing's 1945 version with Toots Camarata of "Ol' Man River." Crosby was the main selling point for the album. And Kapp had no Crosby number for the B side of Bing's "Ol' Man River" disc. Worse, the other prime songs from "Show Boat" had been taken by Kenny Baker, Tony Martin and Frances Langford, three Decca artists whose earlier recordings were to be added to Bing's to create the album.

Kapp's solution was to hitch on to a Crosby recording date an additional piece of material from "Show Boat." It was a comedy patter song written by Kern and Hammerstein for the 1936 movie version. They called it "Ah Still Suits Me." The piece had been created to give Paul Robeson (duetting with Hattie McDaniel) more screen time. Robeson, busy at home and abroad with concerts, shows and films since the 1920s, was becoming star material in the United States.

The March 17, 1947, recording session in Los Angeles was designed mainly to let Bing warble two solos from "The Emperor Waltz" film score. "Ah Still Suits Me" was the other number to be cut.

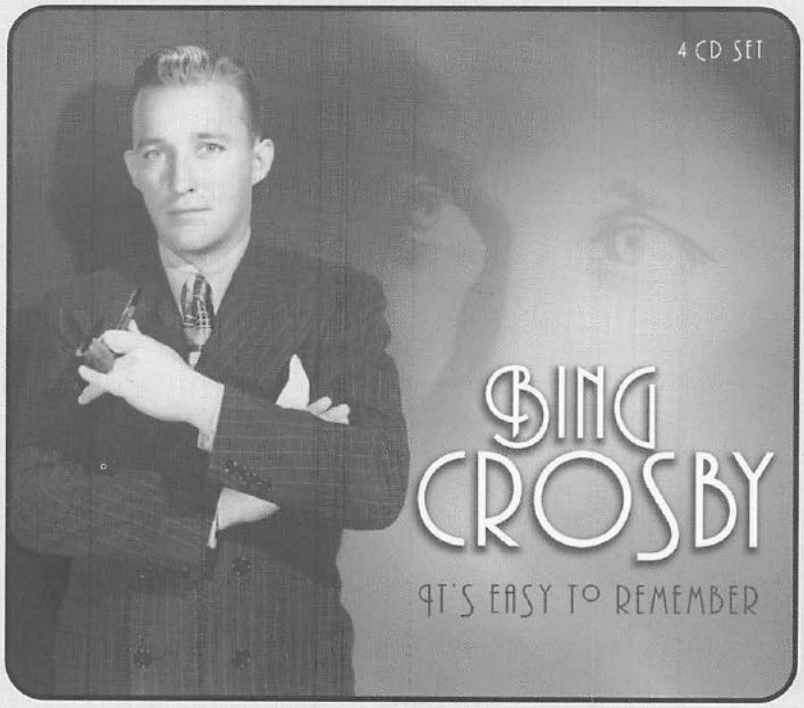
Crosby and Miss Wiley recorded the duet under the somewhat moderated title of "I Still Suits Me." They sang it winningly, but it was the sort of "Southern dialect" material that would not be featured today, at least as written. From what he had said seven years earlier, Bing surely looked forward to working with Lee Wiley. Presumably, Jack Kapp selected their material. But it seems reasonable to think that Victor Young, who conducted the March 17 session, had much to do with bringing Bing and Lee together. He had been a long-time friend of each of them. Indeed, Crosby had insisted that Young conduct the band for Bing's first solo radio show for CBS in 1931. In 1947, Young unquestionably realized that a recording date with Bing, then at the peak of his fame, would be a boost to Lee's unsteady career.

Among Bing's 2,300 recordings, "challenge" numbers like "I Still Suits Me" occur occasionally ("Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better," Crosby - Mercer, Crosby - Hope, etc.) But the Crosby duet with Wiley probably would not have been developed if "I Still Suits Me" had not been the likeliest available "Show Boat" candidate to fill out Decca's album. (Which was not filled out from that show, after all. To come up with eight songs, Kapp had to plug in a Tony Martin rendition of "All the Things You Are," from a different Kern - Hammerstein show.)

By 1947, Bing, at 44, and Lee Wiley, at 39, had become sophisticated and skilled interpreters of show tunes and romantic ballads as well as lively jazz numbers. It seems a pity that they did not record duets of such numbers, in addition to "I (Ah) Still Suits Me." Although Bing sang the song as a duet with Peggy Lee on his Philco show of April 16, 1947 and with Jana Mason on his GE show of March 7, 1954, as far as I know Lee Wiley never touched the song again.

Bob Achorn

BING IT'S EASY TO REMEMBER



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PROPER

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

Welcome to this the first of my reviews for 2002. I have a number of CDs to tell you about but unfortunately there is not much new to compact disc to report on. A number of albums I mentioned last time around have still not turned up and I suggest that you forget about these until I am able to tell you something more positive. I report things in good faith if my sources are normally of a reliable nature but even these from time to time let me down. We all know of the BMG saga after Ken Barnes went to the trouble of mastering several albums only for the company in their wisdom deciding not to release them. I do however feel happy to stick my neck out once again to tell you about two Jonzo albums in the Chronological Bing Crosby series that are in the pipeline and should be available shortly after you read these notes. But first, let's look at:

It's Easy To Remember (4 CD Set) Proper Records Properbox 34 - P1233-36 UK

CD 1: The Rhythm Boy 1. I've Got The Girl, 2. Muddy Water, 3. Side By Side, 4. From Monday On, 5. Mississippi Mud, 6. 'Tain't So Honey, 'Tain't So, 7. If I Had You, 8. Can't We Be Friends, 9. Happy Feet, 10. You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me, 11. Three Little Words, 12. I Surrender Dear, 13. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams, 14. Just A Gigolo, 15. Out Of Nowhere, 16. Just One More Chance, 17. I'm Thru With Love, 18. I Found A Million Dollar Baby, 19. Dancing In The Dark, 20. Where The Blue Of The Night, 21. Dinah, 22. St Louis Blues, 23. Sweet Georgia Brown, 24. Please, 25. A Ghost Of A Chance.

Running Time: 78:52

CD 2: Music, Movie, Memories 1. Brother Can You Spare A Dime, 2. You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me, 3. I've Got The World On A String, 4. The Last Round-Up, 5. Love In Bloom, 6. June In January, 7. Soon, 8. It's Easy To Remember, 9. Red Sails In The Sunset, 10. Silent Night, 11. Moonburn, 12. The Touch Of Your Lips, 13. Pennies From Heaven, 14. Shoe Shine Boy, 15. The Way You Look Tonight, 16. Sweet Leilani, 17. Too Marvellous For Words, 18. The Moon Got In My Eyes, 19. Remember Me, 20. Bob White, 21. Don't Be That Way, 22. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams, 23. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby, 24. If I Had My Way, 25. An Apple For The Teacher *Running Time: 75:45*

CD 3: Vocal Innovators And The Jazz Connection 1. Sierra Sue, 2. Mister Meadowlark, 3. Trade Winds, 4. Only Forever, 5. Along The Santa Fe Trail, 6. Tea For Two, 7. Yes Indeed, 8. San Antonio Rose, 9. The Waiter And The Porter And The Upstairs Maid, 10. The Birth Of The Blues, 11. You Are My Sunshine, 12. Deep In The Heart Of Texas, 13. Wait Till The Sun Shines Nellie, 14. White Christmas (1947), 15. Moonlight Becomes You, 16. Sunday Monday Or Always, 17. People Will Say We're In Love, 18. San Fernando Valley, 19. Swinging On A Star, 20. I Love You (Porter), 21. Night And Day, 22. I'll Be Seeing You, 23. (There'll Be A) Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin, 24. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral, 25. Don't Fence Me In *Running Time: 74:20*

CD 4: King Of The Best Sellers 1. Mine, 2. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive, 3. Put It There Pal, 4. Baia, 5. You Belong To My Heart, 6. If I Loved You, 7. Close As Pages In A Book, 8. Along The Navajo Trail, 9. It's Been A Long Long Time, 10. I Can't Begin To Tell You, 11. Day By Day, 12. Sioux City Sue, 13. After You've Gone, 14. South America Take It Away, 15. A Couple Of Song And Dance Men, 16. I Still Suits Me, 17. Alexander's Ragtime Band, 18. Now Is The Hour, 19. Embraceable You, 20. But Beautiful, 21. Sam's Song, 22. Autumn Leaves, 23. I've Never Been In Love Before, 24. If I Were A Bell

Running Time: 74:22

This is a really nicely packaged set of CDs which covers songs from the onset of Bing's recording career up until 1950. The set comes with a 36 page booklet written by Stan Britt. The notes are well written and make interesting reading. It is also good to see full recording details listed and I am very impressed with the selection of songs although unfortunately there is nothing new to CD included. With the exception of "Along The Santa Fe Trail" (CD 3, track 5) the quality is first class which is what I have come to expect from Proper Records with other purchases I have made. It may therefore seem a little picky of me to now say that there are a number of mistakes in the discographical information but in the interest of correctness I must advise that I am pretty sure that "Just One More Chance" and "I'm Thru With Love" (CD 1, tracks 15 and 16) are most probably the September 1931 radio versions and not the commercial recordings of these two songs as stated in the booklet. Also the version of "Mississippi Mud" (CD 1, track 5) is the Trumbauer recording and not the Whiteman one as indicated. The "White Christmas" (CD 3, track 14) version used is the 1947 recording and not the 1942 one. I would also say that "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" (CD 3, track 24) is most certainly the 1945 commercial version of that song as if you listen to the original 1944 recording Bing sings "Me Mother" instead of "My Mother" (1945) which is the more commonly known version. I am equally sure that "If I Loved You" is the 1947 version and not the 1945 recording as stated. Please do not be put off by these minor points as this an especially enjoyable

collection of Bing's songs. In fact for anyone fairly new to Crosby circles this would be a great starting point. Proper Records are to be congratulated on this great package.

The Chronological Bing Crosby Vol. 26 **Jonzo Records JZCD 26** **UK**

June 13 - December 15, 1939

1. To You Sweetheart Aloha
2. My Isle Of Golden Dreams
3. Maybe
4. Somebody Loves Me
5. Home On The Range
6. Start The Day Right (-A)
7. Start The Day Right (reject)
8. An Apple For The Teacher (-A)
9. An Apple For The Teacher (-B)
10. Neighbours In The Sky
11. What's New
12. Cynthia
13. Medley Of Gus Edwards Song Hits
14. In My Merry Oldsmobile (-A)
15. In My Merry Oldsmobile (-B)
16. Ciribiribin (-A)
17. Ciribiribin (-B)
18. Yodelin' Jive (reject)
19. Yodelin' Jive (-B)
20. Too Romantic
21. The Moon And The Willow Tree
22. Sweet Potato Piper (-A)
23. Sweet Potato Piper (-B)
24. Between 18th & 19th Chestnut Street (-A)
25. Between 18th & 19th Chestnut Street (reject)

The Chronological Bing Crosby Vol. 27 **Jonzo Records JZCD 27** **UK**

February 9 - July 1, 1940

1. Marcheta
2. Tumbling Tumbleweeds
3. If I Knew Then
4. The Girl With The Pigtails In Her Hair
5. Devil May Care
6. The Singing Hills
7. I'm Waiting For Ships That Never Come In
8. Beautiful Dreamer
9. (I Dream Of) Jeanie With The Light Brown Hair
10. Yours Is My Heart Alone
11. Sierra Sue
12. Meet The Sun Half Way
13. April Played The Fiddle
14. I Haven't Time To Be A Millionaire
15. The Pessimistic Character (-A)
16. The Pessimistic Character (reject)
17. Mister Meadowlark (-A)
18. Mister Meadowlark (reject)
19. On Behalf Of The Visiting Firemen (-A)
20. On Behalf Of The Visiting Firemen (-B)
21. Trade Winds
22. A Song Of Old Hawaii
23. Aloha Kuu Ipo Aloha

I understand that both of these Chronological albums should be available by the end of April if all goes according to plan, so I have taken a chance and included details of them here. I will review them properly in the next issue of BING but as you can see there are several tracks new to CD. Jonzo albums 26 and 27 are only obtainable in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7LD. Price £10.70 each including p+p. (or both for £21.10). Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records. USA and Canadian members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (address inside front cover).

Legendary Singers Bing Crosby (2 CDs) **Heartland Music Catalogue # H605-07** **USA**

CD 1

1. Where The Blue Of The Night
2. A Man And His Dream
3. Please (1940)
4. Swinging On A Star
5. I'll Be Seeing You
6. You Belong To My Heart
7. Going My Way
8. I Can't Begin To Tell You
9. Moonlight Becomes You
10. Beautiful Love
11. It's Been A Long Long Time
12. I Love You (Porter)
13. White Christmas (1947)
14. I'll See You In My Dreams
15. Now Is The Hour

Running Time: 43.25

CD 2

1. Far Away Places
2. Some Enchanted Evening
3. Dear Hearts And Gentle People
4. Harbor Lights
5. Indian Summer
6. The Loneliness Of Evening
7. I've Never Been In Love Before
8. Young At Heart
9. Count Your Blessings Instead Of Sheep
10. La Mer
11. Prisoner Of Love
12. Thanks For The Memory
13. Around The World
14. Melancholie
15. The Second Time Around

Running Time: 45.23

At first look, one could be forgiven for thinking that there is nothing new to CD on this double album from the Time-Life outlet, Heartland Music, but if you take a better look you will see "Beautiful Love" which is making its debut in digital form. The sound quality is very good and this combination of Bing songs makes enjoyable listening. Some of the titles on disc 2 have not had too much exposure to CD and I am pleased to add the album to my collection. I am indebted to Wig Wiggins for letting me have a copy for review purposes. To

my knowledge this CD is only available in the USA from Time-Life via the Internet (www.timelife.com) or through mail order from Heartland Music, E Parham Road, PO Box 85535, Dept. 1113, Richmond, Virginia 23285 5535. Price $21.99 for CDs or cassettes.

Bing Crosby And Friends Christmas Special **Park South Records 75766 70643 2 5** **USA**

1. Intro - Jingle Bells - Frank*
2. Silver Bells ñwith Trudy Erwin - radio
3. Mistletoe And Holly - Frank*
4. Deck The Halls - Bing and Frank with choir*
5. Santa Claus Is Coming To Town - Frank*
6. The Christmas Song - Bing and Frank*
7. Jingle Bells - with Gary Crosby - radio
8. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen - Bing and Frank*
9. O Little Town Of Bethlehem - Bing and Frank*
10. Hark The Herald Angels Sing - Bing and Frank*
11. Adeste Fideles - Bing
12. Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer - Bing
13. White Christmas - Bing
14. Away In A Manger - Bing
15. Silent Night - Bing
16. That Christmas - Feeling from Chesterfield Show with the Crosby boys

* from TV special

Running Time: 32.47 *Price: $14.00*

Trying to sort out the source of the tracks on this CD proved to be a somewhat confusing and time consuming task. I was however able to establish that some of the tracks came from the 1957 Frank Sinatra Show: "Happy Holidays with Bing and Frank" which was aired on cable television in America over the last festive season These tracks are marked with an asterisk. Other tracks appear at first to come from this show as they have identical arrangements only to vary at the later stages. I am sorry that I didn't have time to sort out the sources of the other material on this CD. I would say that the quality is a bit patchy with some tracks being rather poor. I wish to thank Wig Wiggins for sending the CD to me for review purposes.

Bing & Louis **Not Known** **Russian Origin**

1. Muskrat Ramble
2. Sugar
3. The Preacher
4. Dardanella
5. Let's Sing Like a Dixieland Band
6. 'Way Down Yonder In New Orleans
7. Brother Bill
8. Little Ol' Tune
9. At The Jazz Band Ball
10. Rocky Mountain Moon
11. Bye Bye Blues
12. Pennies From Heaven (DLA580-A edited)
13. Gone Fishin'
14. Little One*
15. I Love You Samantha*
16. Now You Has Jazz
17. That's A Plenty (with Connee Boswell)**
18. Bourbon Street Parade***
19. New Orleans***
20. The Sheik Of Araby***
21. Mademoiselle De Paris**
22. Only You****
23. Under Paris Skies**

* Bing with Louis on trumpet, ** Bing, *** Louis and The Dukes Of Dixieland, **** Louis and the Benny Carter Orchestra

Running time: 71:15

I am indebted to Michael Crampton who loaned me this CD for review purposes. I am not really sure as to whether I should be reviewing it here as I suspect that it is a pirate version as recording source details are in Russian (mind you it looks all Greek to me!). But I decided to risk it as this is somewhat of a first, coming from Russia. The front sleeve and liner notes are in English as are the track listings. The sleeve has been printed professionally and looks the part of an authentic commercial CD. Tracks 1-11 were originally released on the Bing and Satchmo album that was issued in 1960 but with one track missing ("Lazy River"). The other items included are a bit of a mixture with the film soundtrack version of "I Love You Samantha" (14). The sound quality is very good and I wish that I was able tell you where you can obtain this CD or for that matter how much it costs. Suffice it to say that Bing and Louis are great to listen to whether singing together or on their own.

Cassettes:

The Bing Crosby Variety Show **Mr Punch Ltd Cat No. 00076** **UK**

Side One: Theme, Getting Nowhere, The Blue Tail Fly - Burl Ives, Careless Love with Burl Ives, Ain't Gonna Be Treated This Way with Burl Ives, Comedy dialogue with Peter Lorre, Dr. Lorre's Office Sketch with Peter Lorre, Kay Thompson and The Williams Brothers, Blue Hawaii Parody, Crosby Advert, Your All Time Flop Parade: (Tears In My Ears - Ethel Merman, Boise Idaho with Ethel Merman, Tortured, Washday in The Sky - Ethel Merman, Silver Coated Moon with Ethel Merman) Theme

Side Two: Theme: Linda, Comedy dialogue with Irving Berlin and Al Jolson, Oh How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning - Irving Berlin, Alexander's Ragtime Band with Al Jolson, Comedy dialogue with Irving Berlin and Al Jolson, Just One More Chance, Comedy dialogue, Songwriter sketch with Bob Hope, Comedy dialogue with Maurice Chevalier, Ma Pomme (Just A Bum) - Maurice Chevalier, Louise, Mimi - Maurice Chevalier, Closing Theme.

I purchased this cassette after a fellow member (my apologies for not remembering who it was) sent me some Mr Punch leaflets. The quality is not bad although there is the odd click here and there. The sleeve notes tell us that

Bing hosts two episodes of his popular radio show and indeed it does sound as if there are two complete shows on the cassette. But, anyone who is familiar with Bing's Philco Shows will see that it is a bit of a "pick & mix collection" but for all that it does make enjoyable listening. These cassettes along with two others that I reviewed in BING 128 ("Road To Hollywood / The Bells Of St Mary's" and "Philadelphia Story / Holiday Inn") are available from Mr Punch, 113 Brackenbury Road, London W6 0BQ
Running Time: 1 hour approx. Price: £4.99 in sale or normal price £6.99 each.

Philco Radio Time **Radio Spirits 4544** **USA**
This comprises six C90 cassettes with 18 of Bing's radio shows, all for the bargain price of $34.98 (plus postage)! I haven't heard this set but further investigation indicates that Radio Spirits has a very good web site at www.radiospirits.com and that they have a mass of Bing radio material available on cassette and some (including the Sinatra set below) on CD too. They can also be contacted at Radio Spirits, PO Box 3107, Wallingford, CT 06492, USA (Tel: 203-265-8044). I am advised that some of their cassette collections are available from Borders Books in the USA.

60 Greatest Old-Time Radio Shows - starring Frank Sinatra **Radio Spirits 4225** **USA**
This 20 audio cassette series includes several shows involving Bing, namely:- The Bing Crosby Shows of March 21 and 28, 1954, The Savings Bond Show of May 16, 1949, the Kraft Music Hall of November 16, 1944, Command Performance Shows of February 1, 1944 and June 3, 1944 (this was rebroadcast on June 9, 1945). In addition the Gary Crosby Show of August 15, 1954 featuring Frank Sinatra as a guest is included. Again the price is only $34.98 (plus postage) if ordered direct.

BING ASSOCIATED
The Songs Of Sinatra & Crosby (2 CDs)
Sing Something Simple - The Cliff Adams Singers **BBC Music WMEF 0068-2** **UK**
CD 1 - Sinatra. *This album includes many of Frank's best known songs with the notable exception of "My Way". For those Sinatra devotees who are also followers of Mr Crosby I must apologise as I did not spend time checking if there are any songs included that Frank never got around to singing. See CD 2 below and you will catch my drift.*
CD 2 - Crosby. *This is a very pleasant easy listening selection that reminds one of many of the "Sing Something Simple" programmes that were a part of Sunday afternoon radio in the UK for so many years. There are many of Bing's most popular songs but there are also some that to my knowledge Bing never sang commercially, these being - Nellie Kelly I Love You, I'm Bidin' My Time, You're Just In Love, It's A Sin To Tell A Lie, Mountains Of Mourne and Phil The Fluter's Ball. In any case no one would ever associate these songs with Bing. Nevertheless if you are an admirer of the "Sing Something Simple" style of the Cliff Adams Singers I am sure that you will enjoy both albums. Running Time: CD 1 - 64:14, CD 2 - 59:27 Price £13.99*

PLEASE NOTE: Part of my review of the following LP was omitted in the last issue of BING so I am repeating it again in its entirety as a number of members have contacted me about this.

LP — Somebody Loves Me **Past Perfect Silver Line 904335-980** **Germany?**
Side A: 1. Is You Is Or Is You Ain't (My Baby)?, 2. Sunday Monday Or Always, 3. Don't Fence Me In. 4. There's A Fella Waiting In Poughkeepsie, 5. Somebody Loves Me, 6. I'd Know You Anywhere, 7. San Fernando Valley, 8. Maybe, 9. Swinging On A Star. *Running time: 25.25*
Side B: 1. Day Dreaming, 2. My Buddy, 3. Begin The Beguine, 4. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral, 5. I'll Be Seeing You, 6. Lullaby (Brahms), 7. Pistol Packin' Mama. *Running time: 24.49*
I must admit that I never ever thought that I would be reviewing a new LP in 2001 but here we are with this album which contains a nice selection of Bing's songs from 1939 to 1944. To my knowledge this album is only available in the UK from Vivante Music Ltd Unit 4, 60 High Street, Hampton Wick, Surrey, KT1 4DB. They sent me a list of some 100 artists in their series of Historic 180 gram Vinyl Reissues that sell for £16.95 each or 3 for £35.00 including P&P. The list is heavily jazz orientated with exception of stars such as The Andrews Sisters, Doris Day, Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Nat King Cole, Peggy Lee and Perry Como. I would suggest that any members wishing to obtain this LP should make contact with Vivante before sending any money to them. I nearly forgot to mention that the reproduction is first class - I had forgotten what it was like to listen to such a good quality LP.

GUEST APPEARANCES
The Complete OKeh & Brunswick Recordings Of Bix Beiderbecke,
Frank Trumbauer and Jack Teagarden 1924-1936 **Mosaic Records 211** **USA**
CD 2 Mississippi Mud (W400034-A)
CD 5 Cabin In The Cotton - With Summer Coming On - Love Me Tonight - Some Of These Days
Gary Giddins drew my attention to this seven CD set which is the latest in the limited edition jazz collections put out by Mosaic Records. The set costs $112 and it is limited to 7,500 copies. I haven't heard the CDs but it looks

to be a wonderful collection for followers of Messrs. Beiderbecke, Trumbauer and Teagarden. The tracks Bix made with Paul Whiteman are not included which explains the relatively few Bing numbers. You may order on-line (at www.mosaicrecords.com), by phone at 203-327-7111 or write to: Mosaic Records, 35 Melrose Place, Stamford, CT 06902.

The Songs Of Jerome Kern Till The Clouds Roll By **ASV Living Era CDAJA 5377** **UK**

23 Tracks (3 Bing) Till The Clouds Roll By, Can I Forget You and The Folks Who Live On The Hill

In recent times I have only reported on albums that contain five or more Bing songs but I have made an exception in this case as the title song "Till The Clouds Roll By" is making its debut on CD and besides that there are some other great songs sung by the likes of Dinah Shore, Connie Boswell, Helen Morgan, Paul Robeson, Eddy Duchin, Fred Astaire, Tony Martin, Noel Coward Helen Forrest and Dick Haymes among others. The sound quality is good throughout and I really enjoyed listening to these Jerome Kern songs. This is a very pleasant album which I am sure I will delve into in my radio programmes for Angel Community Radio on cable on the Isle Of Wight and on their one year licence in Havant (FM101.1) from March 1, 2002.

Running Time: 75:12 *Price: £7.99*

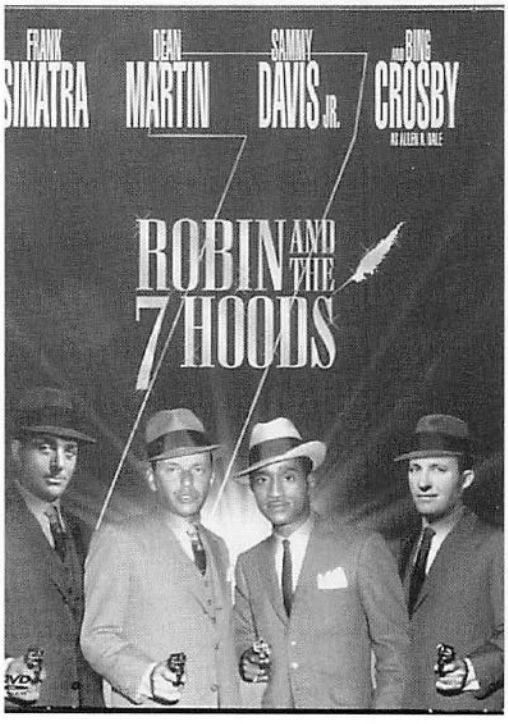
I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members who kindly sent me Christmas cards and to apologise for not being able to reciprocate their kindness in all cases. The cards were greatly appreciated and brightened up my home over the festive season. I would also like to thank the members who enquired after my health as a result of my not attending the Leeds AGM. I am keeping reasonably well, but I do have a number of non life threatening problems that just make every day things I used to do a little more difficult. I am sure that many members are much worse off than me healthwise, but I do appreciate your well wishes.

As you are probably aware I have been collaborating with Wig Wiggins in putting together his discography "Bing Crosby's Commercial Recordings From 78s to CDs" and I am greatly relieved that this is now completed. I think that this is the most comprehensive and easy to use discography that has been published to date, but then I am biased as I have been involved with the project from the outset some three years ago. If you find any spelling mistakes, these are down are down to me (the finger of suspicion points at me - I'm a one finger typist) - I must say sorry to any Michael Holliday fans as I went into Holiday mode when it came to his name on page 70. I do hope that those members who have not yet purchased the book will order it while stocks last. The price is extremely reasonable and I am sure you will agree that Wig has done a fine job in producing this definitive discography of Bing's commercial recordings.

Finally can I mention the year 2003 Calendar - the centenary of Bing's birth. We would like to have a special calendar for next year and would appreciate ideas on what format the calendar should take. Also we should decide if you are prepared to pay more for a souvenir calendar celebrating the 100 years since Bing was born. One idea that comes to mind is for the calendar to be a chronological look at Bing throughout his career with January starting with photographs of the Rhythm Boys and ending up in December with Bing at the Palladium etc. Each month could have two or three photographs depicting stages of Bing's lifetime. Let me know what you think.

Jim Reilly

DVD CORNER



Robin and the 7 Hoods was issued on DVD by Warner Home Video in January. Region 1 encoding (US and Canada only) in a "Letterbox" widescreen format preserving the "scope" aspect ratio of the original theatrical release. The DVD is numbered 21493 and costs $15.99 from Amazon.com. Special features are a feature-length audio commentary by Frank Sinatra Jr., a short behind the scenes documentary "What They Did to Robin Hood" and the original theatrical trailer. Marvellous quality as you would expect. Frank Sinatra Jr. makes some very nice comments about Bing too. The short behind the scenes item contains a few shots of Bing talking to a chorus girl. Some Crosby fans are critical about Bing's songs in this film but personally I find them most enjoyable. The routine when he sings "Don't Be a Do-Badder" is a typical Bing exercise in smooth and apparently casual charm.

Bob Hope - The Road to Collection (Road to Morocco / Road to Singapore / Road to Utopia / Road to Zanzibar) was released by Universal in the US and Canada on March 5. Again Region 1 encoding. The price quoted by Amazon is $52.48 and the DVDs can also be purchased individually for $14.98. The publicity states that the DVDs "also include still galleries, the original radio broadcast shows, and DVD-ROM extras." We look forward to learning more in due course. I think I am right in saying that this is the first time on DVD for "Singapore" and "Zanzibar".

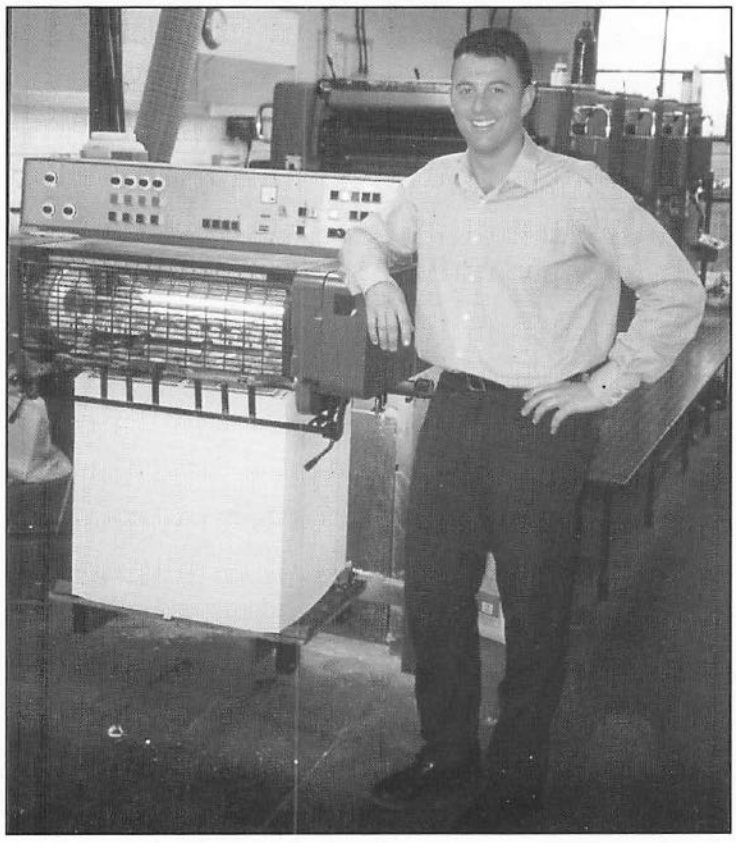
My Favorite Blonde / Star Spangled Rhythm was also advertised as being issued on March 5 and the price for this double DVD at Amazon was $18.74. Again Region 1 encoding.
Let's Make Love is scheduled to be released on DVD on May 14. Region 1, cost $14.98.
White Christmas was issued on DVD by Paramount Home Entertainment in Region 2 format (Europe, Middle East and Japan) last December. The number is PHE8121 and the price is £18.99. The only other Bing film available in Region 2 format at present appears to be **Road to Bali**.

Malcolm Macfarlane

The Man Who Makes It All Happen

Jim Reilly mentioned the new discography which has just been produced and this was printed by the same firm that has put together BING magazine since 1989. The firm also undertakes the distribution of the magazine to our UK members and to our representatives overseas. Although I have been dealing direct with the firm since 1993, I had never actually visited the premises as they are 160 miles from my home. My trip to the John Joyce auction took me right past City Printers in Chester-le-Street, County Durham so I called in and had a very useful meeting with one of the Directors, Gary Henderson. City Printers is a very long established family firm which has grown rapidly over the last five years due to a sound investment plan. Gary is very enthusiastic about BING magazine and I think he almost enjoys reading it! He is keen to see it maintain its improvement and he often suggests ideas as does his colleague Tony who also works on our projects. I am discussing our proposed TV book with Gary. It does make a difference to have someone who really cares about our projects and may I express our formal thanks to Gary and his team for all they have done to help us over the years.

Malcolm Macfarlane



Gary Henderson making it all happen.

Bing Crosby
-Hollywood-

October 6, 1966

Mr. John Weir
5 Westminster Avenue
Morecambe, Lancashire, England

Dear Mr. Weir:

Thanks so much for your nice letter. It's always a genuine pleasure to hear from nice people like yourself, and to realize that I've been able through the years to give you some entertainment, and that you still extract some amusement, recreation and pleasure from the old films when they appear on television.

I haven't seen any of the old pictures, really, since the time they were first released, but I have them all on 16 mm. Every so often, I'm going to start getting them out now and showing them to my new little family and see what they think of them.

It will give them an opportunity to compare me with the Beatles when I was their age.

Thanks again for your letter. Hope you and your family are in very good health and spirits -

Your friend,

Bing Crosby

BC:lm

PULSE! Presents

MUSICAL LEGENDS

By JUSTIN GREEN

HARRY LILLIS CROSBY JR.
1903-1977

Bing Crosby and Eddie Lang

SALVATORE MASSARO
1902-1933

MAIN SOURCE: "*Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams, The Early Years, 1903-1940*," by Gary Giddins, Little, Brown & Co., 2001

At the time of his death, the guitar virtuoso Eddie Lang was the mentor and confidante of his "boss," Bing Crosby, steering the crooner's sensibilities back to the jazz spirit, away from a more homogenized sound with which the growing radio and film audience was content. Crosby felt a direct complicity in the death of his closest friend. He had urged Lang, who had been suffering from a chronic sore throat, to have his tonsils removed in time for the guitarist to have a speaking part in an upcoming film. * There were unexpected complications from the routine operation. The young and undisputed "father of the jazz guitar" died in the hospital.

*Paramount's *College Humor*, 1933

MEA CULPA
MEA MAXIMA CULPA
PSSST IT'S BING!
STILL STEEPED IN GRIEF AND GUILT, CROSBY BARELY PULLED HIMSELF TOGETHER FOR THE PHILADELPHIA FUNERAL.

BING'S SORROW GOT INTERRUPTED BY AN ADORING MOB. LANG'S FUNERAL BECAME A GROTESQUE SURPRISE PARTY. AFTER THIS INCIDENT, CROSBY RETAINED A BODYGUARD. HIS DETRACTORS SAW THIS AS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT AMERICA'S FIRST MULTIMEDIA SUPERSTAR WAS BECOMING ALOOF FROM HIS LOYAL FANS.
WOW! IT'S BING CROSBY!
WHERE?
OMIGOD!
HE'S GOIN' BALD!
QUIT SHOVIN'!
THERE HE IS!
EEEEK! IT'S HIM!
RETURN TO YOUR PEWS AT ONCE!
YOU'RE THE BEST!

Designed & Printed by City Printers (Chester-le-Street) Ltd., Ropery Lane, Co. Durham DH3 3NJ Tel: 0191 3883255